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THE

PHILOSOPHICAL AND AESTHETIC

SCHÖNHEIT

BY J. WEISS.

2.

Schön zu leben, ist wahre Kunst,  
Kunst im Leben das Schöne wahre,  
Leben der Kunst das wahr Schöne,  
Wahres Leben die schöne Kunst.

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## PREFACE.

BEFORE issuing this Translation of Schiller's *Æsthetic Letters, Essays, &c.*, it seems desirable to say a few words by way of Preface, in addition to the valuable Introduction already written by the Translator; for in reading over the proof-sheets while the work was going through the press, I noticed the use throughout the volume of some words either themselves new to most English readers, or used in a sense which would probably cloud the subjects with an unnecessary ambiguity and difficulty of comprehension to almost all readers, except those who are acquainted with their exact German equivalents. A few explanatory remarks, therefore, of such terms may probably prove a useful auxiliary to many.

I should not undertake this task if the Translator were at hand, for he could do it far better; but he is in America, and the time required to communicate with him on the subject would cause an inconvenient delay in the publication of the book.

Of course, if the work were likely to fall into the hands of those only, who have an aptness for abstract disquisitions



and profound metaphysical thought, any such explanations would not only appear superfluous, but presumptuous, for such readers would more easily tread the steps along which Schiller's thought has led him, and elevate themselves to the 'height of his great argument,' than I can hope to do; hence any proffered aid from me would indeed be vain. But amid the busy whirl of commerce and contending interests in which we English live, there are but few of this class; if therefore the work be destined to exert any considerable influence here, it must be read by those who can give but a small portion of time for meditation on such subjects as it embraces, and it is for this class of readers that the following remarks are offered.

I am confident that any one reading the work with attention will gather the general spirit and purpose of its contents; and as the meaning of a book as a whole assists us to an interpretation of its parts wherever a difficulty occurs, I doubt not that any explanatory aid might be dispensed with, especially as there are chance definitions of some of the important terms used in the course of the book; yet a knowledge of the precise signification affixed by a writer to the words he may employ, will very agreeably facilitate the reader in divining his author's thought, and obviate the necessity of foregoing the comprehension of particular passages, until a knowledge of the entire work has been acquired. The first word to which I will now allude will confirm the truth of this remark.

The word "*Æsthetic*," by which the most important part of the present volume is designated, is beset with unusual ambiguity in its signification in consequence of the wide field of philosophy that it comprehends, compared with the restricted one of its original and etymological meaning.

Yet the definition of this word by Schiller in the sense in which he uses it, nowhere formally occurs except in a note at the end of the Twentieth Letter, and I fear the explanation there given is not sufficiently definite and precise to enable an ordinary reader to understand clearly its signification. It is derived from *αἰσθάνομαι*—to feel. “Applied also to the other senses so as to signify, to perceive, see, hear, understand.”\*

As used by Schiller, it expresses that state of humanity which manifests a harmonious and equal development of its *entire nature, exclusive of the will*, comprehending the circle of its sensuous, intellectual, and moral attributes. It supposes an absence of all constraint from any particular law, or more truly such an equable and perfect action of all the laws of nature which centre in humanity that none predominate—there is no tendency in any *particular* direction—hence an equal aptness and capability in *every* direction. It does not embrace the idea of any special kind of *doing*, but the universal *ability to do*. The *complement* of this development is æsthetic Beauty.

It may be objected that this definition is too extensive, and that the province of Æsthetics is confined more exclusively to the sphere of *perception*; perhaps, accurately regarded, it may be so, but I am persuaded that Schiller uses it in this comprehensive sense. His own note at the end of the Twentieth Letter confirms this opinion. And at page 13 of the Introduction, it is said—“The Play-impulse (which is explained below) is not entirely the desire for amusement as displayed in the sports of different nations; all these are

\* Schneider.

but single phases of the Play-impulse, which is equivalent to man æsthetically developed." And Schiller says, at page 111, "Then to sum up all briefly, man only plays, when, in the full signification of the word, he is a *man*, and *he is only entirely a man when he plays*." It is obvious from this, that according to Schiller—a man *entirely developed* and a man *æsthetically developed* is one and the same.

The meaning of *æsthetic* is incidentally expressed *en passant* at page 114:—

"Thus the reflecting man imagines virtue, truth, felicity; but the acting man will practise only *virtues*, comprehend only *truths*, enjoy only *happy days*. To lead the latter back into the former, to substitute morality for morals, felicity for prosperity, knowledge for information, is the business of physical and moral culture; out of beauties, to educe Beauty, is the problem of *Æsthetic culture*."

There are two other terms used in conjunction with *Æsthetic*, of great importance, which embody the main ideas of the work, viz.: *Freedom* and *Play-impulse*. The three are so intimately associated in conception, and each supposes, and in a manner expresses the idea of the other, that an explanation of the meaning of one will illustrate that of the other. Schiller uses the word *Freedom* in a peculiar but definite and accurate sense, meaning the *Æsthetic State* as above defined. The planets are an admirable physical type of his conception of *Freedom*. The centripetal and centrifugal forces by which they are sustained are so equally poised, that their contending tendencies are merged and lost in unity, hence the beautiful and uniform motion (*Freedom*) which obtains; there is a latent capability (abstractedly speaking) in the planet when in this condition of perfect equipoise either to gravitate to the central luminary, or to fly

off into space, so soon as a third force is imagined to come into operation. This third (imaginary) force is the symbol of the human Will when man is the centre of contending laws—sensuous, intellectual, and moral—equal in their power and merged in unity; in other words, when man is *æsthetically free*. As *freedom* in the *æsthetic* sense of the word implies an absence of all tendency or dependence, the idea of spontaneous or impulsive action arises in the mind, as an attribute of a being thus conditioned, and this idea Schiller has expressed by the term *Spieltrieb* — Play-impulse. (See farther explanation at page 13 of the Introduction.) Such a condition supposes a possibility of action in every direction, hence a sphere for the operation of the Will, which as soon as it is developed will determine the kind of action to be pursued.

The pure and lofty conception of Beauty which pervades these Letters is intimately allied with the three preceding terms. Schiller frequently makes use of the word Beauty also, before he tells us in what sense it must be understood. His idea of Beauty is not educed from experience, but from abstract reflection—the pure reason. It is the harmonious complement of all the attributes of man. It comprehends the conception of humanity *æsthetically developed*, and *æsthetically free*. This idea of Beauty is fully evolved and explained in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Letters upon “*Æsthetic Culture*.”

In connexion with Beauty, the word Form, as used in this volume, needs some remark. Perhaps no word throughout the book contains a meaning so difficult to apprehend as this apparently simple one—Form. It is the same word Form in the German, but the gradation of meaning in words is so imperceptible and extensive, that a

mere literal translation of many—this among the number—is not enough. Form, in the German (together with the ideas that we associate with the word), embraces other and more extensive associations, especially as it is frequently used by the Germans in their metaphysical systems, thus becoming necessarily the medium of ideas which cannot be entirely transplanted here without transplanting their philosophies also. *Form*, when used by Schiller, never implies a simple and accidental configuration of inanimate matter, but comprehends the idea of spirituality in matter. Form is the expression of a material and spiritual combination; it always supposes life, and signifies somewhat of its character and attributes—or modes of manifestation.

Perhaps a more accurate definition would be, that Form is the mode of Beauty's manifestation to the senses; hence implies the idea of spirituality, because Beauty is the *result* of an amalgamation of *matter* and *spirit*.

If the reader were to substitute the word *appearance* for *show*, by which *Schein* has been translated, the passage where it occurs would be easier to comprehend.

At page 52, the phrase *phenomenal man* is used as a translation of *der Mensch in der Zeit*. The expression is both accurate and comprehensive, nevertheless I venture to suggest that the literal translation would be plainer, viz.: *the man in time*, or *the actual man*, in contra-distinction to the *ideal man*.

On the same page it is said, "the state must not dispeople the realm of *phenomena*, while extending the unseen realm of morals." True, *phenomena* is a more definite and philosophical translation of *Erscheinung*—*appearance*—than could otherwise be given, but if the expression—*the realm of the actual*, or—*the present*—were substituted for "*the*

*realm of phenomena*," the idea would be more tangible and apprehensible by the majority of readers.

The translator has used the word *intended* in quite a novel sense, which any but a German scholar would find difficult to understand. He has rendered the German *angespannten* from *spannen*—*span*—(meaning bent, strained, stretched, mentally in a state of tension)—by *intended*; and perhaps it is the best translation which could possibly be given *if received in its etymological sense*.

The last word I shall advert to is "*content*," as used in a somewhat peculiar manner at pages 122 and 140. It is a literal translation of *Inhalt*, but the sense of the passage would be more manifest if *Inhalt* had been rendered by *existence* or *reality*. It is said, "What was nothing but a mere possibility in the previous condition of simple determinableness, has now become an active power—acquires a content."

The word *mere* in the above passage ought to be *empty*—*leeres*--which would then contrast more forcibly with *content*—fulness or reality—and bring out the sense more clearly, as will be seen in the following: "What was nothing but an *empty* possibility in the previous condition of simple determinableness has now become an active power—acquires a content."

I must now conclude these intrusive explanations by remarking, that what has been said in relation to particular passages or terms, does not in any way militate against the excellence of the translation, which has been executed with great fidelity. By comparing it with the original, it will be found exceedingly accurate, and remarkable for the freedom and beauty of the style displayed throughout. Indeed Mr. Weiss has accomplished the difficult task of

translating a work into his own language, conserving all the ideas and illustrations entire, without leaving an abrupt or unpolished passage to remind us that it is not an original work we are reading.

JOHN CHAPMAN.

*London, 121, Newgate-street,  
May 27, 1845.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

WE have lately fallen into the error, for which we are indebted to Germany herself, of forcing an unnatural contrast between Goethe and Schiller, her two greatest men. Scholars spend their ingenuity in drawing parallels and exposing differences, when the true process would be to construct an equation and indicate the points of contact. The error has now become almost irremediable : and it seems to be generally understood that the two men would have never lived together in Weimar, if Providence had not designed to puzzle posterity with the contrast, and to occupy its leisure moments with the debate as to which is the greater. They have unfortunately passed into history, with the legal *versus* between their names, which never kept asunder the *Doe* and *Roe* of fiction with a more abiding pertinacity.

This is a great injury which we inflict upon ourselves. Undoubtedly, that delightful period of their common activity at Weimar affords the most natural opportunity for instituting a comparison between them, which is not without its interest and advantage. Their mental tendencies differed too distinctly to escape observation ; perhaps they challenge it, and perhaps the two poets are noteworthy as successful exponents of the two great elements of Humanity, the Real and the Ideal. For neither was Goethe the whole man, nor was Schiller the less complete one, he has been represented. But it is in this

very distinctness with which they developed respectively those two great elements, that we ought to discern, not only the special mission of each, but the still higher mission of both united. It is striking to notice how their diversity produces an unity ; it would be instructive to analyze their characters, in order to perceive their capacity for creating a third character which is the idea of Humanity, the result of the two tendencies which make a man. It seems, then, as if that period of their artistic union was a lucky manœuvre of nature, to bring together her two elements most favourably developed, that she might “give the world *assurance of a Man*.” Where Goethe was deficient, Schiller abounded ; where the latter yearned to express that which is absolute, the former fulfilled definite and ascertained limits. Both were earnest seekers after Truth ; it was for both the very condition of their existence, a demand of their consciousness which they never once evaded. But we attain a steadfast form of truth, and a harmonious development of human faculties, only by combining the results of both : or rather, a true man, made after the divine image, is the union of both their tendencies. There will be a residue, if we attempt to unite the two men as they were, but, that excepted, the product is the type of that which is possible within us ; and as such it should be prized, studied, and never rudely violated. When German scholars have asked, “Which is greater ; Goethe ? Schiller ?” others have sought to deprecate such a distinction, and have taken refuge in the simile of the Dioscuri : but even that will not serve our turn, for *an alternate immortality does not become those who are really immortal and available only when made into one.*

The translator has since found this idea of the genuine relation of Goethe and Schiller to each other and to us, well stated by Gervinus in his admirable history of German Literature. It occurs after a parrallel, or rather statement of a coalition, which exhausts the genius of both, and for insight and completeness is the best extant. “And thus the lines of the double nature in both intersect so manifoldly, that they exhibit

to us a common whole only in the shape of a coalescence, which should delight us and give us the foundation for a self-construction, as it lay in the purpose of the men themselves. Who would choose between them : who would blindly lose sight of that fundamental doctrine of both, which we find so repeatedly, so expressly, in their writings, the doctrine of the united totality of human nature ? Who would esteem either as the One, *per excellentiam*, when they themselves refer us to a *Third*, which is greater than both ? There is only one point of view from which a preference for either is admissible : in the recognition we make of that in our own nature which is narrow and incomplete, and which leads every one, after the very example of our two poets, to that one of both who is foreign to him, that merged in the excellence of an antagonistic nature, he may repair his deficiency, and learn, from the counterfoil of his being, to make the acknowledgment which Goethe made with respect to Schiller—he is what we ought to be ! For not unless we recognise wherein our own existence is deficient, and also strive to be that which we are not, need we hope in some measure to become, what we really ought to be.” \*

With this preliminary we are naturally led to the Letters upon *Æsthetic Culture*, the second piece in this volume : for its aim is to develop this very ideal man, nowhere so nearly expressed in life as in the union of Goethe and Schiller. These Letters stand unequalled in the department of *Æsthetics*, and are so esteemed even in Germany, which is so fruitful upon that topic. Schiller is Germany’s best *Æsthetician*, and these letters contain the highest moments of Schiller. Whether we desire rigorous logical investigation or noble poetic expression, whether we wish to stimulate the intellect or inflame the heart, we need seek no farther than these. They are trophies won from an unpopular, metaphysical form, by a

\* *Gesch. d. poetischen National-Literatur*, v. 522.

lofty, inspiring and absorbing subject. It is impossible to read many of them with an equable colour and an unquickened heart-beat : the voice we hear is "as it were of a trumpet" talking with us, and it says indeed none other than the words heard by John—*come up hither !*

The history of these Letters is interesting, and also necessary for the full enjoyment and understanding of them. On this point the translator avails himself of the labours of Professor Gervinus, the best authority, both in matters of fact and of taste.

Schiller published them in 1795, during a period of the most intense political excitement, when the Reign of Terror was drawing to its close, and the affiliated societies throughout France and Germany stormed the fiercest. He was far from being indifferent to the signs of the age, and was more inclined to call that a genuine movement of humanity which Goethe only regarded as an accidental *émeute*. Some of the early Letters give us his cool opinion and the precise value at which he rated the existing movement : and it will be seen that the character of the times furnished him with the starting-point for his investigations. It is also noteworthy that he addressed the Letters to Christian Frederic, Duke of Holstein-Augustenburg, who had rendered Schiller noble aid when he was sinking under disappointment and disease. The incident is thus related by Mr. Carlyle : "Schiller had not long been sick, when the hereditary Prince, now reigning Duke of Holstein-Augustenburg, jointly with the Count von Schimmelmann, conferred on him a pension of a thousand crowns for three years. No stipulation was added, but merely that he should be careful of his health, and use every attention to recover. This speedy and generous aid, moreover, was presented with a delicate politeness, which, as Schiller said, touched him more than even the gift itself." He could make no return more worthy than the work which was the first fruit of his convalescence.

The prince stood at the head of the Danish circle, which

the poet Baggesen had inspired with an enthusiasm for Schiller, and which, strangely enough, seems to have embraced the French ideas of Freedom with greater warmth than the middle class. "If this Prince is not ours beyond doubt," wrote Baggesen to Reinhold, "then all the Posas\* can betake themselves with their schemes to Bedlam." When directed to such a man, the political observations in the commencement of the *Æsthetic Letters*, have a suitableness and significance. The philosophic poet feels that the age requires a declaration of Freedom rather than of Beauty; and the great process pending in France, which ought to be decided by the reason, naturally would engage his pen. But he withstands this temptation, and excuses himself not on the ground of inclination, but *on principle*. He undertakes to show, that to solve this political problem, one must pass through the region of the *Æsthetic*. To prove this, he considers in one view the nature of Man and of the State, and finds that if man would exchange the state of nature or need for the moral state, he must possess that totality of the ancients, in whom there was a distinct harmony of thought, perception and action, both in Art and Polity; while our bodies politic display rudeness in the lower, and relaxation in the higher classes. We cannot suppose that the State, which has induced this evil, can of itself obviate it: where the upper classes do not use their freedom, they need not be deprived of it, and it need not be given to the great mass who blindly abuse it. All political improvement can result only from ennoblement of the character; but how can that take place under a barbarous polity? For this design we must seek an instrument which is independent of the State, and lay open sources which preserve themselves pure through every political depravation. This instrument is

\* Posa, the philosophic Marquis in Don Carlos, the type of Schiller himself: always doing homage to the Right, always on the side of Humanity, the sworn foe of falseness and injustice.

the Fine Arts. The Artist may secede from his age and elevate himself above it.

This carries us to the Tenth Letter; and the whole range of German Literature cannot afford a composition equal to the Ninth, in dignity of statement, nobility of idea, aptness of language. Schiller emerges from the relations of his century, and stands upon the peak of time: he gives law to his age, he utters that which must be an inspiration not to be withstood, for all the true-hearted, for those who are now breaking ground for our Future. There is hope for our young country only if we succeed in acclimating the principles of the poet.

Schiller then proceeds to consult experience for the effects of Beauty upon the character. History declares that nations have declined in proportion to their æsthetic culture, that enervation and loss of freedom have followed close upon refinement. But perhaps, he says, experience is not the arbitress in the decision of this question; at least it remains to be proved that the Beauty against which all historical examples seem to testify, is the same Beauty concerning which he intends to speak. He then proceeds to evolve the conception of Beauty from the reason, and to establish something necessary and absolute which shall be independent of the old declarations of history, and whose realization in life shall create history anew. This is certainly a more satisfactory process than if Schiller had postponed his interrogation of the Reason, and had sought to present history as a sure, but hitherto imperfect and fragmentary, development of the pure idea of Beauty. More satisfactory, because he is thereby able to demonstrate that which no history has yet displayed, and to prophesy surely and hopefully a better future. To show how the State must finally represent his idea of Beauty, is better than merely to show how or why the State has hitherto misrepresented it, or how a philosophy of history might explain and combine isolated and incongruous phenomena. The new Beauty which Schiller discovers is equivalent to a philosophy of history, and he returns to the order of nature in the Twenty-third and Twenty-

fourth Letters. The three different moments, passivity under nature's force, freedom in the æsthetic state, and government of that force in the moral state, are the three epochs for the developement of humanity in the mass and in the individual, just as they are the condition of every cognition we receive through the senses: we pass to the Real through the Ideal, to the deeds of manhood through the wishes of youth.

It is, however, the opinion of Gervinus that Schiller would have simplified the matter by confining himself wholly to the historical method, and by showing how experience contradicted in nowise his principles. "That Schiller did not return to his problem, in the course of the Letters, and that he did not carry out the idea he started of the relation between æsthetical and political culture, but left it as a fragment, permits us to regard it as one of those interruptions caused by circumstances, and which demands a future man, with a like affinity for the past and present time, to knit together in a favourable moment the dissevered threads. Before we ourselves are farther advanced in our political culture, we shall not dare to decide, why the most artistic nation of the earth has had the purest civic development; how far an æsthetic people is qualified by its harmonious culture for the creation of a harmoniously compacted polity; under what conditions a people which has attained this culture will remain stationary complacently, and feel more contented to decline in the province of Art than to aspire in the State; and how long it would bear the discrepancy between its *actual* political position and that more worthy one, which would correspond with its degree of culture and fullness of power."\*

Following this there is an admirable analysis of the remainder of the *Æsthetic Letters*, to the temptation for translating which I should yield, were not the temptation greater to leave the field fresh and unexplored for every lover of Schiller and

\* *Gesch. d. poetischen National-Literatur*, v. 426.



his subject. Those parts which are purely metaphysical will not be repulsive, and the iron consistency of the whole precludes their being slighted. Schiller emerges from all of them with grace and ease, and requites us for our labour by the captivating and inspiring statements of his conclusions. The dizzy and perilous trains of thought all lead to high, sunny table-lands, and into green resting places: they are like the bridge, fine as a hair and keen as a razor, which the Faithful must pass to reach Paradise.\*

A history of the *Æsthetic Letters* properly includes a statement of Schiller's relation to Kant, since we find in the First Letter an admission that they are based upon Kantian principles. But a thorough discussion of this relation is much beyond the limits of an introduction, which will only admit such points as are necessary for the proper appreciation of Schiller's *Æsthetic* theory. Schiller was never strictly a disciple of Kant, but only coincided with him in one or two mental tendencies which they held in common. The pure subjective method of Kant was modified by him, so as to include the objective also. In one respect he was nearer Fichte than Kant, because the former distinguished Object from Subject, while the latter only made it dependent upon Subject. Fichte's metaphysical formula, which has provoked so much burlesque † and has excited so many good-natured

\* Schiller's prose style is well adapted to metaphysical investigations. That which Jean Paul calls "the perfection of pomp-prose," with its parallels and antitheses, avails the intellect quite as much as the imagination. Schiller's parallels bear along two ideas related or opposed, in company with each other, balancing them by the way, till their absolute or relative weight is ascertained. In fact, all the Letters may be said to state the two tendencies of humanity in a parallel, which skilfully develops, and finally unites in, a third product, the *Æsthetic Man*.

† See, for instance, Coleridge's remarks upon Fichte's Egoism, and a Note upon page 95 of *the Biog. Literaria*: "the categori-

suspensions of insanity,  $I=I$ , is certainly the first term of any genuine metaphysical theory, because thereby the Not- $I$ , that is, World, in the widest sense of that word, is left as a quantity independent of our own Subject. Therefore the operation of Subject and Object is *reciprocal*. It is not true, with Kant, that the outward is only a projection of the modes of our Understanding, which position admits nothing absolute, nothing positive and independent, save the categories into which the Understanding is divided: neither is it true, with Hume and others, that the source of all our knowledge is empirical, and only the efflorescence of the five senses. There is a point between the two, and in a plane higher than both, an union of fact and idea, induction from, and anticipation of, Nature, a distinct appreciation of the respective *capacities* of Subject and Object, which is the only true starting-point for metaphysics and the only safe ground for science. Schiller attempted to throw himself into that position: the result was,

cal Imperative, or the annunciation of the new Teutonic God, *Εγώ ενκαίπαυ*, &c." But Fichte did not state the reciprocity of Subject and Object: he assumed the former as the absolute substance, thereby only declaring the first term of a correct metaphysics. His position is assailable, because it is unqualified. Schelling unfortunately made it still less practicable. But in Schiller we recognise the two necessary distinctions, first, between the finite Subject and the Divinity; second, between Subject and Object: and nothing can be plainer than his statement of the reciprocity of the latter. The two former distinctions save us from Pantheism, the ground-idea of which, as a system, is, the entire uselessness of any system at all, just as death is the unquestionable remedy of all disorders: and the idea of reciprocity saves us from the materialism of Kant, for that is materialism, in which the cognitions *a priori* (or the Understanding in action) both create, and yet are only possible through, the Object,—so the latter in reality limits all faith and knowledge. Schiller affected neither the system nor the terminology of Kant. (For the finest Analysis of Kant's system, see that by Mr. Brownson, in his *Boston Quarterly*, 1844.)

that he made Kant's theory of *Æsthetics* available, or more strictly speaking, he rejected the process of pure speculation, and sought to give contents to Form; his plastic spirit wrought in Matter and the world of sense, and was not content with Kant's "pure abstract method of deduction from conceptions." He was a Kantian only so far as Kant was practical, and only where his ideas, "extricated from their technical form, appear as the prescriptive claims of the common reason," and are the common sense of humanity.

But it was Kant's stern morality which first attracted Schiller, and which, after all, is the only genuine bond of union between the two philosophers. Kant was disgusted with the sentimentality of pietism and poetry, on the one hand, and with the loose philosophy of Wieland and the *Anacreontic* school, on the other: and he promulgated a system which reproduced in a scientific form, the high ethics of Christianity, and he applied them, moreover, with distinguished success, to every sphere of human activity and knowledge. The sensualism of the age was rebuked, and its waves arrested. This was the chief benefit of Kant's labours: his metaphysical system is only a material idealism, proving nothing, giving no positive result, excepting as it shows the incapacity of the understanding, "which is of the earth, earthy," but his application of Christian morality to every relation of life, to every sphere of science, and most especially, to that of *Æsthetics*, was positively useful, productive of immediate results, regenerating the tone of German thought. This was Kant's real mission, on this rests his fame, and it is here that he commands respect and invites research.

This mental tendency of Kant was an irresistible attraction for the severe and pure mind of Schiller, and the sage of Königsberg invited him precisely where Goethe was repelled. Here recourse is again had to Gervinus, for his statement of the way in which Kant and his dominant tendency affected Schiller's *Æsthetics*. "Kant separated Art from all the demands of exigency and utility; he defined a free Beauty as

something distinct from dependent Beauty, and made the essential of Art to consist in the Form. He regarded the fine arts, if they were not brought into union with moral ideas, as mere means of mental dissipation: he called Beauty the symbol of moral goodness, and the fine arts the embodiment of moral ideas. To him, the development and culture of the moral feeling appeared to be the true preliminary to establishment of the taste, which ought to create a passage from the allurements of sense to an habitual moral interest. These were the principles which mainly attracted Schiller. The obscurity and discord in Kant on the subject of the relation of sense and morality, determined him to separate them distinctly; the attractive opinions upon the Sublime, one of the finest places in Kant's writings, where the dry limbs of speculation are clothed with the pleasant green of fact and example, arrested his attention: the hints which Kant let fall concerning the happy union of a lofty culture and its constraint of law with the force of free nature, in the Grecian humanity, and a chance word that Art compared with Labour may be considered as a Play,—all excited a storm of ideas in the mind of Schiller, to whom this province was familiar; and he now strove on all sides, from sheer stress of thought, to give himself full utterance. It thus came to pass, that he finally dared to accomplish that of which Kant despaired. The latter had proposed to develop and to establish the subjective principle of Taste as an *à priori* principle of the Judgment; he had denied an objective principle. But Schiller developed this in his *Æsthetic Letters*, and thus *ipso facto* refuted him."

Although Schiller coincided with Kant particularly on the side of morality, yet he did not sympathize entirely with Kant's presentation of the idea of Duty and Right. It was too hard and Draconic. He was disposed to abate somewhat of Kant's asceticism, because "he regarded virtue more as inclination for duty; he respected the demands of nature, he would have man obey his reason with joy. And thus, con-

scious of his moral dignity, he placed himself on the side of the Latitudinarians against the moral Rigorists." But how far this led Schiller into latitudinarianism, in the common sense of that word, will be pretty evident on the perusal of the essay upon the "Limits of Taste," in which the loose principles of modern novelists, and the dilettantism which indulges *artistic* admiration of men whose principles corrupt Art, excepting so far as it is only imitative—are pointedly rebuked. There is no doubt that Schiller regarded not only a love for Truth, but also a love for virtue, as essential to form the true Artist: and when it is said that he diverged from the asceticism of Kant, it is to be understood only with reference to his more Christian statement of Duty. In one place he has defined Christianity as "the moral Imperative transfigured by Love." Kant's system does not admit the latter principle: his morality is "hung with clattering categorical imperatives," and though an admirable antagonistic statement to the Epicureanism of his day, wants that creative, renewing principle, which substitutes for obedience to the Law, a love of God.

That chance word of Kant's, "that Art compared with Labour may be considered as a Play," is the origin of Schiller's Play-impulse, a term nowhere used by Kant. But his "Critique of the Judgment" furnishes us with remarks like the following: "Every form of objects of sense (both of the external and, mediately, of the internal) is either *Shape* or *Play*: in the latter case, either play of shapes (in Space, posture and dauce) or play of perceptions (in Time)." "To make a distinction between Art and Labour, the one may be called *free*, the other *paid*. We regard the first as subserving a design only as play, that is, as an occupation in itself agreeable: but the second, as a task imposed, that is, as an occupation in itself disagreeable, and only attractive through its result (that is, the pay)." "Oratory is the art which carries on a business of the intellect as a free play of the imagination: Poetry, that which conducts a free play of the imagination as a business of the intellect;" and several other passages, certainly not quite

stinct and practical, particularly in the Analysis of the Sublime, where Kant makes a free use of this idea of Play as mental disposition. Schiller has erected it into a theory, and the Play-impulse is the chief nerve of his æsthetic system. The Letters explain satisfactorily what he means by it, and how even the common use of language justifies the adoption of the term. Suppose that at any moment we should have the twofold experience of perception and of reflection, and should exist as Matter and Spirit, we should have at that moment a complete intuition of our Humanity. It would evolve the Play-impulse: the word play indicating all that is neither internally nor externally contingent nor constrained. The Play-impulse is not entirely the desire for amusement, as displayed in the sports of different nations, nor the faculty of Humour, in which, by the way, Schiller is curiously deficient. But all these are but single phases of the Play-impulse, which is equivalent to man æsthetically developed: it indicates a nature whose two tendencies are poised and have a mutual and harmonious operation. The æsthetic Art-impulse will never unfold itself, if the Play-impulse has not first become active.

So far as the sports of a people are indicative of its æsthetic culture and the development of its Play-impulse, the sons of the Puritans may be judged to be still in a state of nature. With us it is most emphatically "all work and no play." Our life is hard, austere, thoroughly empirical; the oscillation to the subjective extreme has just commenced. We are not self-poised, our centre of gravity is not removed far enough from the surface: we are not yet Persons, but we only represent conditions. The common national life does not depend upon anything, it is like a superficies from which the interior has fallen quite away, leaving it thin and hazardous. The *outside* look imputed to us expresses exactly our want of development, fulness, æsthetic balance: in short, tried by Schiller's æsthetic rules, we are not so enormously removed from the savages whom we have just dispossessed, and whose arrow-heads the New England plough still turns up

in numbers. So long as we seek definite results, "fiery-red with haste," and those results not always the most ennobling, we shall never apprehend that golden mean between Person and Condition, Freedom and Nature, where the true humanity will finally rest and expand.

"The age culls simples,  
With a broad clown's back turned, broadly, to the glory of the stars—  
We are gods by our own reck'ning—and may well shut up the temples,  
And wield on, amid the incense-steam, the thunder of our cars.

"For we throw out acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,  
With, at every mile run faster,—‘O the wondrous, wondrous age,’  
Little thinking if we work our *Souls* as nobly as our iron, —  
Or if angels will commend us, at the goal of pilgrimage."

Many of the characteristics of Schiller's age, mentioned in the earlier Letters, will be found to indicate also our own. See particularly the Second, Fifth and Sixth.

The other Essays contained in this volume were written before the Letters upon *Æsthetic Culture*, excepting the two immediately succeeding: and though they display great insight, sound criticism, a lively moral sense, and are full of admirable views and suggestions, yet they have no particular system, and do not betray the master-hand which gave us the Letters. They are the results of his meditations during the study of Lessing, Winckelmann, Aristotle and Kant. Some of them were designed to make an application of Kantian principles, that "Upon the Sublime," for example. They might be freely illustrated with hints, and parallel passages from Kant's *æsthetic* works, but with no particular utility, since he is everywhere more practical than Kant, and is the best interpreter and applier of his speculations. Two of Schiller's best Essays, remain untranslated, "Upon Grace and Dignity," and "Upon *Nüive* and *Sentimental Poetry*." Each is nearly

as long as the Letters upon *Æsthetic Culture*, and may possibly appear in a second volume of *Translations*. In the one "upon *Näive and Sentimental Poetry*," he constructs the conception of the perfect Poet, as he constructed the perfect humanity in the *Æsthetic Letters*. It is less abstract than the latter, and more historical, that is, it describes the national poets and criticises different kinds of poetry, and abounds in application and example. Schiller regards *Näive and Sentimental poetry* as the only possible modes in which the poetic genius can make expression.\*

Though "The Philosophical Letters," given in this volume, have no connection with *Æsthetics*, yet they are interesting as revealing one of the early moods of Schiller's mind, and also attractive from the subtilty of thought and expression. That he did not rest in the pantheistic "*Theosophy of Julius*," is sufficiently indicated by the Preface of the Letters, even if his future writings did not make it manifest. Schiller has nowhere distinctly stated the articles of his religious faith, and probably, judged by most orthodox standards, he did not possess any. But if we believe that a pure and earnest heart, a quick and honest conscience, a distinct perception of Christ as the ideal of virtue and the embodiment of a divine life, are the things needful to create a Christian, then was Schiller one. But if, in addition, we are disposed to insist upon some intellectual statement of the method and circumstances of that revelation of Goodness, or if, venturing still farther, we claim certain statements of doctrine as *essential to the reproduction* of this goodness,—then indeed is Schiller no longer a Christian; for he supplies us nowhere with a *Christology*, though the two

\* Of the rest of Schiller's philosophical writings, the following have been translated: "The Mission of Moses"—in the *Monthly Repository*, 1825: part of his introductory Lecture to an historical course at Jena, in Mrs. Austin's "*German Prose Writers*:" and "The Stage, considered as a Moral Institution," in the *Knickerbocker*: February, 1845.



principles of Duty and Love are most distinctly stated and applied. His inner life was doubtless better than any definition of a Christology, even were it made by a Schiller. And if the possession of this inner life is the destiny of humanity, if it is by such fruit that the human soul is to be known, then Schiller must have had somewhere an adequate Christology, and a definite supernatural one too—supposing the latter essential to the formation of a divine life. But as the Founder of our Faith has himself declared such to be non-essential, we are forced to believe that Schiller's adequate Christology was simply the possession of that spirit, which is anterior to all intellectual statements, which nerves the will, keeps sacred the conscience, and which is to be known as *Life*: or, in apostolic language, it is Christ himself formed in our hearts. To ask *how* that life arises, or to demand this or that intellectual garnish, as if the life were else invalid, is immediately to leap the pale of Christian toleration, and recall those times when unconverted disciples would fain have kindled a fire out of heaven for non-conforming Samaritans, and those later times when the same fire was kindled with torch and fagot—since heaven has always sympathized with heretics, and will not burn.

The undeniable characters of a good life cannot be denied to Schiller: he is known by his works—in every sense. Pure, high-minded, truth-loving, enamoured of virtue for her own sweet sake, he presents to us the lofty spectacle of a man pursuing the ideal of his race through every opposition, disappointment, loss. He would realize Christianity, which is the moral law transfigured by love. In his own person he represents the struggles of humanity: his life was an unfinished prophecy. It is inspiring, because his deeds were vast, and rang like the sounds of a trumpet: it is pathetic and purifying, because it contained the divine element of sorrow, and we are given to see a spirit, not only battling with the world and with necessities, but well-nigh over-mastered by its own yearning. He was the direct ambassador of the Ideal; he had an indefeasible right to dictate to humanity the terms of its

culture, because he evolved it from the regenerative idea of duty as Love. And what he preached, he practised.

Therefore we do not require that the Philosophical Letters should be anything more than a fragment, which they are: neither are we troubled about his antique, Græco-hebraic "Artists," or "Gods of Greece," composed during the same period. His maturer writings present to us his genuine creed and philosophy, and show us his heart still honest and pure, still unstormed, though a Titanic intellect had often encamped before it. His special mission was to legislate for man's *Æsthetic Culture*, and to plant art upon the principle of morality. Therefore we are to look for an intellectual development congruous with that design, and to expect neither the sermonic style nor substance.

In the concluding paragraph of the essay on "*Æsthetic Manners*" contained in this volume, Schiller seems to confound Religion with the prospects of immortality, and to make the former a substitute where true virtue does not yet exist. But this is only a temporary assumption on his part, of the popular definition of religion. He merely wishes to state the relation of the common conception of the latter to that which is absolutely religious --- that is, a love of virtue. Till men possess true virtue, they must have *legality*, or an obedience to the law; which conception includes reward and penalty. Absolute religion is a love of virtue, because that alone fulfils our destiny; it is a necessity of our spiritual organization, and therefore entirely independent of any reference to reward or penalty. But Schiller's concession to the weakness of human nature is only temporary; he declares the maximum of man's capacity, that he may not continue for ever content with a minimum. Neither are we to regard virtue as its own reward, which is a dilution of the Kantian principle: because then vice would be avoided only from a desire for moral happiness, which deportment interpolates the element of reward. But virtue must be won because it is the sole condition and pabulum of our spiritual life. We demand no pay for

breathing, and we do not carry it on because it turns out to be a luxury; we only wish to sustain life.

In conclusion, the translator would fain make some reparation for having called this an introduction. It is very inadequate, in view of whom and what it was his duty to introduce, and he joyfully concludes the bungling formula which was honestly meant to facilitate the formation of the reader's new friendship. And with respect to the translation, he can only hope never to have violated the meaning of the author. The pleasant task is concluded which has made the beloved Schiller so long a household word and a daily presence; and a premonition of solitude and loss makes the multiplying last words a temptation, which is withstood only for the sake of the reader.

NOTE. With the passage of Schiller above designated, compare the Twenty-fourth Letter of the *Æsthetic Culture*; and particularly the noble passage in the sixth paragraph.—The prescribed limits of this introduction force the translator to resign one or two anticipated topics, connected with Schiller's theory.

Feb. 20, 1845.

THE

PHILOSOPHICAL LETTERS.





## PREFACE.

THE reason, like the heart, has its epochs and its destinies, but its history is more rarely developed. We seem to be satisfied with developing the passions in their extremes, aberrations and consequences, without regarding their intimate connexion with the thought-system of the individual. The universal root of moral depravity is a partial and fluctuating philosophy, so much the more dangerous, since it deceives the bemisted reason with a show of legality, truth and conviction, and is therefore less under the restraint of a native moral sentiment. On the contrary, an enlightened understanding elevates even the sentiments—the head must fashion the heart.

In an epoch like the present, when the simplification and diffusion of reading have so wonderfully increased the thinking community, when the blissful resignation of ignorance begins to give way to a dawning improvement, and only a few are willing to remain stationary where the accidents of birth have cast them, it appears to be not entirely unimportant to watch the roused and progressive reason in certain crises, to adjust certain truths and errors which insinuate themselves into morals, and may be respectively the source of happiness and misery,—and at least, to point out the hidden rocks upon which the proud reason has so often suffered shipwreck. We seldom arrive at truth except through extremes; we must first exhaust error—and often madness—before we can attain the radiant goal of peaceful wisdom.

A few friends, animated with a like ardour for truth and moral beauty, who have arrived at the same persuasion from

very different routes, and now view the travelled path with tranquil looks, have united in a project to unfold some revolutions and epochs of thought, some excesses of the speculative understanding: and under the fiction of two young men of unequal characters, to give them to the world in the form of a correspondence. The following letters are the commencement of this experiment.

Thus opinions which are set forth in these letters, can only be relatively true or false, according as the world is reflected in either soul, and in no other. The progress of the correspondence will demonstrate, how these partial, often exaggerated, often contradictory assertions, will resolve themselves finally into a universal, refined and steadfast form of truth.

Scepticism and free-thinking are the fever-paroxysms of the human spirit, and, even by the unnatural convulsions which they cause in well-organized minds, must at last promote established health. The more dazzling and seducing the error, the greater triumph for the truth: the more torturing the doubt, the greater the summons to conviction and settled certainty. But it is necessary to expose this doubt, this error; knowledge of the disease must precede the cure. If an impetuous youth fails to discern the truth, it loses as little as virtue and religion, when the vicious disown them.

These previous remarks were necessary, in order to specify the point of view, from which we wish the following correspondence to be read and judged.

## PHILOSOPHICAL LETTERS.

### JULIUS TO RAPHAEL.

In October.

You have left me, Raphael, and fair Nature disappears—the leaves fall yellow from the trees, and a sad Autumn-mist settles like a pall over the exhausted fields. I wander solitary through the melancholy country, calling loudly upon your name, and am vexed that my Raphael does not answer me.

I had endured your last embraces. The mournful rattling of the carriage which bore you hence, at length had died away. I, so happy, had already raised a beneficent hillock over the joys of the past, but now you stand anew in these scenes, like a departed spirit, and are present with me again in each favourite spot of our rambles. I have climbed these rocks by your side, and wandered through this boundless field of vision. In the dim sanctuary of these beech trees we first conceived the bold ideal of our friendship. It was here that we first opened the ancestral tables of the spirit, and Julius found in Raphael so near a kinsman. There is no fountain, no thicket, no hill, where a memory of vanished bliss does not even dash athwart my peace. All, all has conspired against my recovery; for wherever I tread, I recall the sad scene of our separation.

What have you created me, Raphael? What so lately has become of me! Great, dangerous man, would that I had



never known you, or never lost you! Hasten back upon the wings of love, return, or the tender shoot of your planting is gone. Can your mild spirit venture to leave your attempted work so far from its completion. The ground-pillars of your proud wisdom totter in my brain and heart, all the splendid palaces built by you, fall prostrate, and the bruised worm writhes sorrowfully among the ruins.

Happy Eden-time, when with blindfold eyes I reeled through life, like one drunken—when every curiosity and wish were bounded by the paternal horizon—when a clear sunset portended for me nothing loftier than a fair auroral morrow—when only a gazette admonished me of the world, only the death-knell, of eternity, only spectre tales, of an account beyond the grave—when I still quailed before a spirit of Evil and clung the more affectionately to the Divinity. I felt and was happy. Raphael has taught me to think, and I am in the path to lament my creation.

Creation?—That is only a sound without sense, which my reason cannot admit. There was a time when I was conscious of nothing, when none were conscious of me; so we say, I was not. That time is no more, and so we say that I am created. But we know nothing more of the millions who have appeared for centuries, and yet we say they are. On what do we ground the right to affirm a beginning and deny an end? We maintain that the cessation of spiritual existence contradicts the infinite goodness. Then did this infinite goodness first originate with the creation of the world? If there has been a period when spirits did not exist, was the infinite goodness, even a whole previous eternity, ineffective? If the fabric of the world is a perfection of the Creator, was his perfection incomplete before the world's creation? But such a presumption contradicts the idea of the perfected God, then were there no creation—whither, Raphael, have I reasoned myself? Fearful labyrinth of my conclusions! I reject the Creator, as soon as I believe in a God. Then wherefore do I need a God, if I suffice without a Creator?

You have stolen the belief which gave me joy. You have taught me to despise, where once I worshipped. A thousand things were so venerable to me, before your gloomy wisdom exposed them. I saw a throng press church-ward, I heard their inspired devotion unite in fraternal worship—twice I stood by the bed of death, twice saw—the mighty miracle of religion, the hope of heaven victorious over the terrors of annihilation, and the fresh beams of joy kindling in the dim eye of the dying.

Divine, yes divine must the doctrine be, I cried, which the best of men acknowledge, which conquers so mightily, and so wonderfully consoles. Your cold wisdom quenched my enthusiasm. For you said to me, just as many once thronged around the hermae and the temples of Jupiter, just as many have as cheerfully mounted their funeral-pile in honour of their Brahma. Shall that which you find so odious in paganism, prove the divinity of your doctrine?

Believe nothing but your own reason, you continued. There is nothing holy but truth. What the reason recognises, is truth. I obeyed you, sacrificed all my opinions, fired, like that desperate conqueror, all my ships, when I landed on this island, and destroyed all hopes of retreat. I can no longer be reconciled with an opinion which I once derided. My reason is now all to me, my only guarantee for divinity, virtue, immortality. Woe to me henceforth, if I find this to be only a surety for denial, if my veneration sinks before its conclusions, if a shattered brain-thread agitates its operations. Henceforth my happiness depends upon the harmonious action of the sensorium. Woe to me, if the strings of this instrument give an uncertain sound in the critical periods of my existence—if my convictions flutter with my pulsations!

## JULIUS TO RAPHAEL.

YOUR doctrine has flattered my pride. I was a prisoner—you have led me forth to the day; the golden light and the illimitable expanse have delighted my eyes. Hitherto I was content with the modest fame of being called a good son of my family, a friend of my friends, a useful member of society; you have changed me into a citizen of the universe. My desires had made yet no inroad upon the rights of the great. I tolerated the fortunate, since beggars tolerated me. I blushed not to envy one part of humanity, since a still greater part remained for me to pity. Now I learned for the first time, that my claim to enjoyment was as weighty as that of my brethren. Now I perceived that I appropriated a portion of atmosphere no greater or less, than the lords of the earth. Raphael severed every bond of conformity and opinion. I felt myself entirely free; for the reason, said Raphael to me, is the only monarchy in the world of spirit; I bore my imperial throne in my brain. All things in heaven and on earth, have no value, no estimation, beyond that conceded by the reason. The whole creation is mine, for I possess an indisputable authority to enjoy it fully. All spirits—one degree lower than the Infinite Spirit—are my peers, since we all obey one principle, do homage to one sovereign.

How elevated and magnificent sounds this annunciation! What store for my thirst after knowledge! But—unhappy contradiction of Nature—this free, aspiring spirit is wound into the inflexible, immutable clockwork of a mortal body, embroiled with its little wants, yoked to its petty destinies—this god is banished to a world of worms. The vast space of Nature is open to his activity, but he may not entertain two ideas at once. His eyes bear him to the porch-lamp of divinity, but he himself must slowly and painfully creep towards it through the elements of time. To exhaust one enjoyment he

must renounce all others; two unlimited desires are too great for his narrow heart. Each newly-acquired joy costs him the sum of all the former ones, and the present moment is the sepulchre of all the past. A lover's hour is a pulsation deducted from friendship.

Wherever I look, Raphael, how confined is man! How great the distance between his pretensions and their fulfilment! How enviable his beneficent slumber—wake him not! He is so happy till he begins to ask, whither he must go, and whence he came. Reason is a torch in a dungeon. The prisoner knew nothing of the light, but a dream of freedom gleaned over him, like a flash in the night, which leaves it all the darker. Our philosophy is the unfortunate curiosity of Oedipus, who never ceased to inquire, till the hideous oracle solved itself:—

“Who and whence art thou, never canst thou know!”

Does your wisdom recompense me for that of which it has deprived me? If you had no key to heaven, why should you have forced me from the earth? If you knew beforehand, that the way to wisdom led through the frightful defiles of doubt, why did you hazard the innocent peace of your Julius upon this doubtful cast?

———If something bad  
Is lying all too near upon the Good  
Which I had thought to do, I fain forbear  
To do the Good.

You have torn down a hut that was inhabited, and have founded on the place a splendid palace of the dead.

Raphael, I demand my soul from you. I am not happy. My courage has gone, and I distrust my own powers. Write to me quickly! Only your healing hand can pour balm into my burning wound.



## RAPHAEL TO JULIUS.

HAPPINESS like ours, Julius, without interruption, would be too much for a human lot. This thought often haunted me in the full enjoyment of our friendship. What then embittered my bliss, was a wholesome preparation to alleviate my present condition. Having been tempered in the stern school of resignation, I am more alive to the consolation of seeing in our separation an easy sacrifice, wherewith to compensate destiny for the joys of a future union. You never knew till now, what renunciation is. For the first time you suffer.

And yet perhaps it is for your benefit that I am just now torn from your side. You are afflicted with a disease, from which, in order to be secure from a relapse, you can only recover of yourself. The more forsaken you feel, the more you will call into requisition every remedy within yourself; the less immediate alleviation you receive from deceitful palliatives, the more surely you will succeed in totally eradicating the evil.

I do not repent of having roused you from your sweet dream, although your present condition is painful. I have done nothing but hasten a crisis, which sooner or later infallibly occurs to such souls as your own, while everything depends upon the period of life in which it is endured. There are situations in which it is fearful to despair of truth and virtue. Woe to him, who has to contend with the subtilties of a refining reason, while still under the dominion of passion. I have fully experienced what that is, and to guard you from such a fate, nothing remained for me but to render this unavoidable contagion harmless by inoculation.

And what more favourable moment could I choose for it, Julius? You stood before me in the full vigour of youth, body and spirit in the lordliest prime, oppressed by no cares, fettered by no passion, free and strong, to meet the great conflict whose

reward is the noble calm of conviction. Truth and error were not yet woven into your interests. Your enjoyments and virtues were independent of both. You needed no bugbear to warn you from low excesses. A taste for nobler pleasures had made them odious to you. You were good from instinct, from unpolluted moral grace. I had nothing to fear for your morality, if a structure fell, on which it was not founded. And so your misgivings do not alarm me. I know you too well, Julius, whatever a melancholy humour may suggest to you!

Ungrateful man! You slander reason, you forget what joys it has already afforded you. Even if you could have avoided during life the perils of scepticism, it would have been my duty not to have withheld enjoyments from you, of which you are capable and deserving. The point on which you stood was not worthy of you. The path, up which you toiled, compensated you for all of which I deprived you. I remember with what transport you blessed the moment when the scales fell from your eyes. And perhaps that ardour, with which you embraced the truth, has led your all-devouring fancy to an abyss, from which you shrink with horror.

I must follow the track of your inquiries, in order to discover the source of your complaints. Once you wrote down the result of your reflections. Send me that paper, and then I will answer you.

### JULIUS TO RAPHAEL.

THIS morning I have been rummaging my papers, and have recovered a lost essay, composed in these happy hours of my proud enthusiasm. Raphael, how that whole period has changed: like the wooden scaffolding of the stage when the

lights are gone. My heart sought for itself a philosophy, and fancy, interposed her dreams. That which was warmest was for me the truest.

I search for the laws of spirit—I strive to reach the infinite, but I forget to demonstrate that they really exist: and so a bold attack of Materialism overthrows my creation.

Peruse this fragment, dear Raphael. May you succeed in rekindling the expiring sparks of my enthusiasm, in reconciling me with my genius ; but as for my pride, it has sunk so deeply that even Raphael's approbation will hardly raise it again.

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## THEOSOPHY OF JULIUS.

### WORLD AND MIND.

THE universe is a thought of the Deity. Since this ideal spirit-form has stepped forth into reality, and the new-born world has embodied the draught of its maker—pardon me this human representation—it is the business of every thinking being to discover the first outline in this existing whole, the principle of the machine, the unity in the composition ; to search for the law in the phenomenon, and to analyze the structure to its ground-plan. Thus I find only a single mode (*Erscheinung*) in nature, namely, Mind, the thinking essence. The great embodiment which we call World, now remains to me remarkable, only because it is at hand to denote by symbols the manifold expressions of that essence. All within and without me is only a hieroglyph of a power which resembles me. The laws of Nature are the ciphers, which Mind combines, to make itself intelligible to Mind—the alphabet, by whose means all spirit communicates with the Father of spirits and with itself. Harmony, truth, order, beauty, excellence, give me joy, because they place me in the active condition of their designer, their possessor ; because they reveal to me the presence of a rational, sensible being, and leave me to divine my affinity with that being. A new experience



in this kingdom of truth, gravitation, the discovered circulation of the blood, the nature-system of Linnaeus, tell me directly the same as an antique recovered from Herculaneum—both give only a reflection of a spirit, a new acquaintance with an existence like my own. I converse with the Infinite through the instrument of Nature, through universal history : I read the soul of the artist in his Apollo.

Reason from effect to cause, Raphael, if you would persuade yourself. Every condition of the human soul has somewhere a similitude in the physical creation, whereby it is indicated ; and not artists and poets alone, but even the most abstract reasoners, have supplied themselves from this rich magazine. Lively activity we call fire ; time is a stream which hurriedly rolls away ; eternity is a circle : a secret conceals itself in the midnight, and truth dwells in the sun. I even begin to believe that the future destiny of the human soul lies prophesied in the dark oracle of the material creation. Each coming spring, which attracts the budding plant from the earth's bosom, gives me insight into the sad enigma of death, and confutes my anxious fears of an eternal sleep. The swallow, which we find torpid in winter, and see revived in spring ; the dead caterpillar, which lifts itself, renewed as a butterfly, in the air, afford us striking symbols of our immortality.

How notable does all become to                      Now, Raphael, everything around me is teeming with life. I find no desert in the whole of Nature. Wherever I discover a body, there I suppose a spirit—where I perceive motion, there I divine a thought.

Where no dead lie buried, where no resurrection is,  
still the Almighty speaks to me through His works, and so I understand the doctrine of an omnipresent God.

## IDEA.

ALL spirits are attracted by perfection. All—with some departures, but no single exception—all strive after the condition in which they have the highest free utterance of their powers ; all possess the common impulse to extend the sphere of their activity, to absorb all things, to collect and appropriate what they recognise as good, as excellent, as attractive. Intuition of the beautiful, the true, the excellent, is a momentary possession of those qualities. We ourselves step into whatever condition we perceive. We are possessors of a virtue, authors of an action, discoverers of a truth, holders of a happiness, at the moment when we entertain a conception of them. We ourselves become the object of our perceptions. Do not here confuse me, Raphael, with a dubious sneer ; this supposition is the foundation upon which I ground all the subsequent argument, and we must agree, before I can have the courage to complete my edifice.

The internal feeling of every one responds to this. If, for example, we admire a deed of magnanimity, valour, wisdom, does not a secret consciousness in our hearts whisper, that we are able to do the like ? Does not the deep blush which mantles our cheeks while listening to a history of such, betray that our modesty trembles at the consequent admiration—that we are embarrassed at the praise which the ennobling of our natures must acquire for us ? Yes, at such a moment even our bodies harmonize with every motion of the actor, and openly express that our souls have passed over into his condition. When present, Raphael, where a great event was related before a numerous assembly, did you never perceive how the narrator himself expected the incense and absorbed the applause which was offered up to his hero ? and if you were ever the narrator, did you not surprise your heart in this pleasant illusion ? You have had examples, Raphael.

of the eagerness with which I can quarrel with my bosom friend for the reading of a beautiful narrative or an excellent poem, and my heart would secretly confess, that it only envied you the laurel which passes from the actor to the narrator. A quick and deep artistic feeling for virtue passes universally as a great disposition for virtue, as on the contrary one does not hesitate to suspect the heart of a man, whose head comprehends moral beauty slowly and with difficulty.

Do not object to me, that frequently through a lively recognition of a perfection the opposite imperfection discovers itself, that a deep enthusiasm for excellence often seizes even the wicked, that a desire for lofty herculean greatness sometimes animates the weak. I know, for example, that our admired Haller, who so manfully unmasked the cherished inanity of idle rank, to whose philosophical greatness I have paid the tribute of so much veneration—that even he was unable to refuse the still emptier inanity of a knight's-star, which was an affront to his greatness. I am convinced that in the happy moment of the ideal, the artist, the philosopher, and the poet are actually the great and good men whose image they portray; but with many this ennobling of the spirit is only an unnatural condition, violently induced by a quicker agitation of the blood, a bolder flight of fancy; but which for that very reason vanishes in haste, like every other enchantment, and delivers the exhausted heart to the despotic whim of abject passions. The exhausted heart, I say—for an universal experience teaches, that the relapsing sinner is always the more desperate, that the renegades of virtue only take a sweeter compensation in the arms of vice for the onerous constraint of repentance.

I wished to prove, Raphael, that an external condition is our own, if we perceive it; that perfection becomes our own at the instant when we create for ourselves a representation of it; that our satisfaction at truth, beauty and virtue finally resolves itself into the consciousness of a personal nobility, a personal enrichment; and I think I have proved it.

We have conceptions of the wisdom, goodness, and justice

of the Most High, but none of his omnipotence. To denote his omnipotence we assist ourselves with the serial representation of three successions: Nothing, His Will, Something. It is darkness and chaos—God says, let there be light, and there is light. If we had a real idea of his active omnipotence, we should be creators, as He is.

Then every perfection which I perceive, becomes my own—it gives me joy because it is my own; I desire it because I love myself. Perfection in nature is no property of matter, but of spirit. All spirits are happy in their perfection. I desire the happiness of all spirits, because I love myself. The felicity which I imagine, becomes my felicity; therefore it behoves me to awaken these representations, to repeat, to elevate them—it behoves me to diffuse felicity around me. Whatever beauty, whatever excellence, whatever enjoyment I produce externally, I produce internally; whatever I neglect or destroy, I neglect to my own loss: I desire felicity for others, because I desire it for myself. Desire for the felicity of others we call benevolence.

### LOVE.

Now, dear Raphael, let me look around. The height is gained, the mist has fallen, I stand as in a blooming landscape, girt by immensity. A purer sunshine has illuminated all my conceptions.

Then Love—the fairest phenomenon in the animated creation, the omnipotent magnet in the world of spirit, the source of devotion and the noblest virtue—Love is only the reflection of this single power, an attraction of the excellent, founded on an instantaneous exchange of personality, a reciprocity of being.

If I hate, I deprive myself of something; if I love, I am

the richer by what I love. Pardon is the recovery of an alienated possession—human hatred a prolonged suicide—selfishness the greatest poverty of a created being.

When Raphael stole from my last embrace, my soul was rent, and I wept at the loss of my fairer half. On that holy evening—you well remember—when our souls for the first time passionately came in contact, all your great feelings were mine—I laid claim to your excellence through my eternal right of possession alone; prouder to love you, than to be loved by you, for the first has made me a Raphael.

Such the powerful impulse of affection,  
That in gentle stress of sweet connexion,  
Bound our hearts for ever into one !  
Raphael, hand in hand with thee ascending,  
I essay the path that upward tending,  
Melts within the spirit-sun.

Happy, ah thrice happy ! Have I found thee,  
Out of millions twined myself around thee,  
And of millions thou alone art mine.  
Let then Chaos with returning ocean,  
Dash all atoms in a wild commotion —  
Ever will my heart repose on thine.

In thine eyes a kindred glance bestowing,  
See I not my own Elysium glowing ?  
Only do I love myself in thee.  
Nature decks herself in brighter splendour,  
And the heaven lying clear and tender,  
Mirrored in my friend I see.

Gently dries her tears reviving sorrow,  
Seeking on the breast of love to borrow  
Respite sweet from passion's wave.  
And the bliss that tortures yet entrances,  
Raphael, seeks within thy spirit-glances  
Longingly a rapturous grave.

If alone within creation living,  
Souls to crags my fancy would be giving,

I would kiss them and embrace.  
 Should I vex the ether with my sighing,  
 All the clefts would cheer me with replying—  
 Sympathy is wide as space.

Love finds no place in the unison of souls, but only in their harmony. I recognise with pleasure my feelings again in the mirror of your own, but I devour with fiery longing the nobler ones, in which I am deficient. One principle governs love and friendship. The tender Desdemona loves her Othello for the dangers which he has encountered; the manly Othello loves her for the tears which she shed for him.

There are moments in life, when we are disposed to press to our bosom every flower and every distant star, every lofty spirit of our divining—an embracing of all nature, as of our beloved. You understand me, Raphael. The Divinity is already very near to that man, who has succeeded in collecting all beauty and greatness, all excellence, both in the small and great of nature, and in evolving from this manifoldness the great unity. The whole creation sinks into his personality. If each man loved all men, then every individual would possess the world.

The philosophy of our times—I fear—contradicts this doctrine. Many of our thinkers have lent themselves to sneer out of the human soul this heavenly impulse, to obliterate the *sensu* of Divinity, and to dissipate this energy, this noble enthusiasm, in the cold, deathly breath of a sordid indifference. In the slavish feeling of their own abasement, they have contracted with Self-love, that dangerous enemy of benevolence, to explain a phenomenon which was too godlike for their narrow hearts. They have woven this comfortless doctrine out of a paltry egoism, and have made their own limitations the unit-measure of the Creator: degenerate slaves, who cry down freedom amid the clank of their fetters. Swift, who has converted the fault of folly into the infamy of humanity, and first wrote his own name on the pillory which he built for the whole race—Swift himself could not inflict upon human nature

a wound so deadly as these perilous thinkers, who adorn Self-love with all the display of subtilty and genius, and ennoble it to a system.

Why should it undervalue the whole race, because a few members happen to despair of its worth?

I confess freely, I believe in the reality of a disinterested Love. I am lost, if there is none—I give up divinity, immortality and virtue. I have no evidence remaining for these hopes, if I cease to have faith in Love. A spirit who loves himself alone, is an atom floating in the immeasurable void.

### SACRIFICE.

BUT love has produced effects which seem to contradict its own nature.

I can imagine, that I increase my own happiness by a sacrifice which I bring to the happiness of another—but what if this sacrifice be my life? And history has examples of such a sacrifice, and I feel deeply that it ought to cost me nothing to die for Raphael's safety. How is it possible, that we consider death a means to increase the sum of our enjoyments? How can the cessation of my existence consist with the improvement of my being?

The supposition of an immortality destroys this contradiction but it also defaces for ever the lofty grace of this phenomenon. Love forbids regard to a rewarding future. There must be virtue which suffices even without the thought of immortality, which effects the same sacrifice, even at the peril of annihilation.

True, it ennobles the human soul to sacrifice present to eternal advantage—it is the highest point of egoism—but egoism and love divide mankind into two very dissimilar

classes, whose limits never interfere. Egoism erects its centre in itself; Love plants it beyond itself, in the axis of the eternal All. Love intends unity: egoism is solitude. Love is the co-ruling citizen of a flourishing republic; egoism, a despot in a desolate creation. Egoism sows for gratitude, love is willing to reap ingratitude. Love bestows, egoism lends—the same in the sight of the judging truth, whether it lends on the enjoyment of the next moment, or on the prospect of a martyr-crown—the same, whether the interest falls in this life or in the other.

Imagine, Raphael, a truth, which will benefit the whole human race to distant centuries—suppose, too, this truth condemns its confessor to death, and can only be proved, only be believed if he dies. Imagine then a man with the clear, embracing sunlight of genius, with the fire-wheel of inspiration, with the whole sublime capacity of Love, Let the perfect ideal of that great effect rise in his soul—in the hour of dark misgiving let all the happy ones whom he will make, pass before him—let the present and the future crowd at once into his spirit—and now answer me, does this man need the reference to another life?

The sum of all these feelings will weave themselves into his personality, will flow into one with his Me. He himself is the mankind which he now imagines. It is a body, in which his life hangs like a drop of blood, forgotten and superfluous, ---how quickly will he shed it for its safety!

## GOD.

EVERY perfection in the universe is united in God. God and Nature are two Magnitudes, equal to each other.

The whole sum of harmonious activity, which exists to-



gether in the divine Substance, is isolated in Nature, the fac-simile of that Substance, into innumerable grades and measures. Nature (allow me this figurative expression) is an infinitely divided God.

The divine Me has dispersed itself into numberless sensible substances, as a white beam of light is decomposed by the prism into seven coloured rays. And a divine being would be evolved from the union of all these substances, as the seven coloured rays dissolve again into the clear light-beam. The existing form of Nature is the optic glass, and all the activities of spirits are only an infinite colour-play of that simple divine ray. Should it ever please the Almighty to shatter this prism, then the barrier betwixt himself and the world would fall to ruin ; all spirits would disappear into one Infinite spirit, all accords would melt into one harmony, all streams would rest in one ocean.

The attraction of the elements gave to Nature its material form. The attraction of spirits, multiplied and continued to infinity, must finally lead to the abolition of that separation, or (may I utter it, Raphael ?) create God. Such an attraction is Love.

Then Love, dear Raphael, is the ladder on which we climb to a likeness unto God. Without assumption, and unconsciously, we tend thitherward.

Lifeless clay-groups are we, if despising--  
 We are gods, if each the other prizing,  
 For the sweet constraint of love we pine.  
 Through the ranks of spirits uncreating,  
 Upward rules this impulse unabating,  
 Even to the throne divine.

Hand in hand, with never checked career,  
 From the pagan to the Grecian seer  
 Standing next the lowest scraph's place,  
 Wander we in circling dance fraternal,  
 Till within the sea of light eternal  
 Sinking, vanish ~~to~~ and space.

Friendless yearned the universal Maker,  
 Framing spirit for His joy's partaker,  
 Holy mirror of His holiness ;  
 Yet no equal with the Highest dwelleth,  
 But eternity around Him swelleth  
 From the cup of Life's excess.

● Love, Raphael, is the potent arcanum, again to restore the degraded king of gold from the unsightly chalk, to rescue the eternal from the perishable, and the great oracle of Duration from the destroying brand of Time.

What is the sum of all the preceding ?

Let us perceive excellence, and it becomes our own. Let us become intimate with the lofty, ideal Unity, and we shall cling together with fraternal love. Let us plant beauty and joy, and we reap the same. Let us think clearly, and we shall love passionately. Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect, said the Founder of our faith. Weak humanity recoiled at this injunction, therefore he expresses himself more intelligibly : love one another.

Wisdom, with the sunny look,  
 Mighty goddess, cannot brook  
 Love's triumphant presence !

Up the steep and starry road,  
 To the Infinite's abode,  
 Who before thee going  
 Boldly rends the veil away,  
 Through the grave lets in the day,  
 Heaven to thee showing ?

Thither lured she not at will,  
 Could we be immortal still ?  
 Can the angels Godward press,  
 Saving through her holiness ?  
 Love alone conducts the soul  
 To the Father of the whole—  
 All her might confess.

Here, Raphael, you have the creed of my reason, a hasty outline of my attempted creation. In such wise have the seeds sprung up, which yourself scattered in my soul. Rejoice or laugh, or blush at your pupil, as you please ; but this philosophy has ennobled my heart, and adorned the perspective of my life. It is possible, dear friend, that the whole framework of my conclusions has been an unsubstantial vision. The world, as I have here portrayed it, is perhaps nowhere actual but in the brain of your Julius : perhaps after the lapse of the million years of that Judge, on whose seat the promised wiser man sits, I may be ashamed of my raw design at sight of the true original. All this may happen, I expect it ; but then if reality bears no resemblance to my dreams, it will be a more majestic, a more delightful surprise. Should my ideas indeed be fairer than the ideas of the eternal Creator ? What—would He suffer his sublime work of art to fall below the anticipations of a mortal connoisseur ? It is the very ordeal of his great achievement, and the sweetest triumph for the greatest of spirits, that false conclusions and illusory perceptions of himself do no harm, that every serpent-fold of the licentious reason at last strikes into the straight path of eternal truth, that finally the same mouth receives all its lingering tributaries. Raphael, what ideas does that artist awake in me, who, however deformed in a thousand copies, still preserves his identity in all the thousand, and whom even the desecrating hand of a bungler cannot deprive of that homage which is his due.

Besides, if my statement were entirely false, and what is more, utterly spurious, I am convinced that it must be so necessarily ; and yet it is possible that all results may coincide therewith. Our whole knowledge, as all philosophers agree, consists in a conventional illusion, with which nevertheless the strictest truth may subsist. Our purest conceptions are by no means images of things, but only their necessarily determined and coëxisting signs. Neither God, nor the human soul, nor the world are actually that which we consider them. Our ideas of those things are only the endemic forms, through

which the planet which we inhabit transmits them to us. Our brain belongs to this planet, consequently also the idioms of our conceptions which lie stored there. But the power of the soul is peculiar, necessary, and ever like itself; the caprice of the material through which it expresses itself, does not alter the eternal laws by which that expression is made, so long as this caprice does not contradict itself, so long as the symbol corresponds to the thing symbolized. Just as reflection unfolds the relations of the idioms, these relations must actually exist in the things themselves. Then truth is no property of the idioms, but of the results—not the similarity of the symbol with the thing symbolized, of the conception with the object, but the agreement of this conception with the laws of reflection. In the same way mathematics makes use of figures which exist nowhere but upon paper, and finds by means of them what exists in the actual world. What similarity, for example, have the letters A and B, the signs: and =, X and —, with the fact that constitutes our result? And yet the comet, predicted for centuries, advances from the farthest heaven—the expected planet crosses the disc of the sun! Columbus the world-discoverer, ventures, on the infallibility of his calculation, the hazardous strife with an unexplored ocean, to seek the second half yet wanting to the known hemisphere, the great island Atlantis, wherewith to fill the chasm on his chart. He found it, this island of his paper, and his reckoning was just. Would it have been less so, if a hostile storm had shattered his ships, or driven them back to their port? The human reason makes a similar calculation, if it surveys the supersensuous with the aid of the sensuous, and applies the mathematics of its results to the physics of the hidden world. But the reckoning still wants its last proof, for no traveller has returned from that land, to recount its discovery.

Human nature, and each individual, has its own limitations. For the former we will console ourselves reciprocally: the latter will excuse to Raphael the inexperience of his Julius. I

am poor in conceptions, a stranger to many sciences which are deemed indispensable to researches of this kind. I have belonged to no philosophical school, and have read few books. It may be, that here and there I substitute my fancies for the stricter deductions of reason, that I sell the free play of my blood, the doubts and needs of my heart, for sober wisdom; even that, my friend, should not cause me to rue the lost moments. It is actual gain for the universal perfection, it was the foresight of the All-wise spirit, that the wandering reason should people the chaotic land of dreams, and fertilize the barren soil of contradiction. We esteem not only the mechanical artist, who polishes the rough diamond into the gem, but also the other, who ennobles the common stone into the specious dignity of the diamond. Assiduous Form can sometimes cause the massive truth of Matter to be forgotten. Every exercise of reflection, every refined subtilty of the spirit, is a slight step towards its perfection—and every perfection must attain existence in the complete world. Reality does not restrict itself to the absolutely necessary, it comprehends also the relatively necessary; every production of the brain, every tissue of wit, has an inviolable right of citizenship in this higher sense of creation. In the infinite design of nature, no activity need be omitted, no degree of pleasure be wanting to the universal happiness. The world's great steward, who does not let a mote fall useless, or a corner remain unpeopled, where there is still room for animate enjoyment, who nourishes asps and spiders with the poisons that are deadly to man, who calls out a growth from the province of corruption, who dispenses frugally the little buds of rapture which might generate delirium, who finally elaborates vice and folly into excellence, and knew how to weave the great idea of imperial Rome from the lust of Tarquinius Sextus—this inventive spirit should not reject even error for his great designs, and let this ample world-tract in the human soul lie savage and joyless. Every aptness of the reason, even in error, increases its aptness for the reception of truth.

Dear friend of my soul, let me constantly add my mite to the vast web of human wisdom. The sun-image is painted differently in the dew-drop of the morning and in the majestic mirror of the earth-girdling ocean! But shame upon the dull and misty morass which never receives and never gives it back! A million plants drink from the four elements of nature. A store-house stands open for all; but they mingle and produce their sap in a million different ways. Such fair manifoldness proclaims a rich lord of the house. There are four elements from which all spirits create; their Me, Nature, God and the Future. All unite and produce in a million different ways, but there is one truth which, like a prime axle, passes through all religions and all systems—"approach the God of your own conceptions."

#### RAPHAEL TO JULIUS.

It would be bad, truly, if there were no other way of giving you peace, Julius, than by again restoring to you a belief in the firstling of your reflections. I have found again in your papers, with inward satisfaction, those ideas whose germination I witnessed. They are worthy of a soul like yours, but you cannot and need not remain stationary here. There are joys for every age, and pleasures for each stage of the spirit.

It must indeed be hard for you to tear yourself from a system which was so entirely adapted to the exigencies of your heart. No other, I venture to say, will again take root so deeply within you, and perhaps you only need to be left entirely to yourself, to become sooner or later reconciled again with your favourite ideas. You would soon discover the weak points of opposing systems, and then, with equal indemonstrableness, seize the most desirable, or perhaps find new

reasons for saving, at least the essential, even at the expense of some bold assertions.

But all this is not in my plan. You should attain to a higher *freedom of spirit*, where you would no longer need such helps. Truly this is not the work of a moment. The usual aim of the earliest culture is subjugation of the spirit, and of all the tricks of education, this at first almost always succeeds. Even you, with all the elasticity of your character, appeared destined, more than a thousand others, to a willing submission to the sway of opinions, and this condition of minority would have the longer lasted with you, the less you felt its oppression. Your head and heart are in the closest union. The doctrine becomes estimable to you through the teacher. You soon succeed in discovering its interesting side, in exalting it according to the wants of your heart, and in consoling yourself by resignation for those points which must offend you. You despise attacks against such opinions, as the malicious revenge of a slavish soul under the rod of its task-master. You paraded your chains, which you thought you bore from free choice.

Thus I found you, and I saw with grief, how often in the enjoyment of your happiest moments, and in the expression of your noblest powers, you were oppressed by an anxious reference to others. The consequence with which you acted according to your convictions, and your strength of soul which lightened every sacrifice, were doubled restrictions upon your activity and happiness. I determined at once to frustrate those ignorant attempts to force a spirit like your own into the mould of a common head. All depended upon making you conscious of the worth of self-reflection, and upon inspiring you with confidence in your own powers. The result of your first essay was favourable to my design. It is true, your imagination was more exercised thereby, than your intellect. Its conjectures made quicker reparation for the loss of your dearest convictions, than you could expect from the snail-pace of cold-blooded inquiry, which advances step by step from the

known to the unknown. But this inspiring system gave you the first satisfaction in this new field of activity, and I was very careful not to disturb a welcome enthusiasm, which the development of your finest traits demanded. Now the scene has changed; a return to the guardianship of your childhood is for ever intercepted. Your way leads onward, and you need no more indulgence.

It need not surprise you, that a system like your own could not endure the test of a severe criticism. All experiments of this kind, which resemble yours in boldness and extent, have no other fate. Nothing too was more natural, than that your philosophical career should begin with you individually, as with mankind in the mass. The universe was always the *first* object of human investigation; and hypotheses concerning its origin and the connexion of its parts, had employed the greatest thinkers for centuries, when Socrates called down the philosophy of his age from heaven to earth. But the limits of human wisdom were too narrow for the proud curiosity of his followers. New systems arose from the ruins of the old. The ingenuity of later times ransacked the boundless field of the possible answers to that ever-recurring question concerning the mysterious principle of nature, which no human experience could disclose. Some indeed succeeded in giving the results of their meditations some show of precision, fullness and evidence. There are many juggling arts, by which the vain reason seeks to conceal its confusion at not being able, in the extension of its knowledge, to surpass the bounds of human nature. By dissecting a conception into the individual elements, from which it was at first *arbitrarily* compounded, one easily imagines that he has discovered new truths. A latent presumption soon serves for the first link in a chain of conclusions, whose defects one knows how to conceal craftily; and the surreptitious inferences are admired as lofty wisdom. One soon amasses partial data, in order to found a hypothesis, being silent about the opposing phenomena; or one changes the signification of words to suit the wants of the syllogism. And



these are not mere artifices of the philosophical charlatan, in order to deceive his public; but even the most honest, impartial inquirer, often uses unconsciously the same means, to quiet his thirst for knowledge, as soon as he has once transgressed the sphere, in which alone his reason can enjoy its activity with certainty of success.

These intimations must not a little surprise you, Julius, after what you have once heard from me. And yet they are not the products of a sceptical caprice. I can render you an account of the grounds on which they rest, but I should have to premise with a somewhat dry discussion of the nature of human cognition, which I rather defer to a time when it might better meet your wants. You are not yet in a frame of mind to be interested with the humbling truths concerning the limits of human wisdom. Inquire first into the system which conflicts with your own; examine it with equal impartiality and rigour, and proceed in like manner with other theories, with which you have lately become acquainted. And if none of all your demands are perfectly satisfied, then the question will occur to you, whether these demands were actually *legitimate*.

"A sorry consolation," will you say: "is resignation, then, my only prospect after so many glowing hopes? Was it worth while to invite me to the full exercise of my reason, only to restrain it exactly where it began to be most available to me? Must I then learn to know a higher enjoyment, only to feel the more painfully my confinement?"

And yet it is just this disheartening feeling under which I would so readily oppress you. To remove everything which hinders your full enjoyment of your being, to quicken in you the germ of every lofty inspiration—the consciousness of your soul's nobility—this is my aim. You are roused from the slumber into which you were rocked by subservience to foreign opinions; but you will never fulfil the measure of greatness for which you are destined, if you spend your strength in striving after an unattainable goal. This state of

things might last till now, and was too, one natural result of your newly-acquired freedom. The ideas which hitherto have most occupied you, must necessarily have given the first directions to your spirit's activity ; and your own experience would have taught you sooner or later, whether this was, of all possible ones, the most fruitful. My business was only to accelerate, if possible, this period.

It is a common prejudice, to estimate the greatness of the man according to the *matter* on which he is employed, not according to the *manner* in which he elaborates it. But a higher being certainly honours the *stamp of completion* even in the smallest sphere, while on the contrary he looks down in pity upon the vain attempt to comprehend with insect-glance the universe. Among all the ideas that are contained in your essay, I can least allow the position, that it is the highest destiny of man to divine the spirit of the Creator in his works. It is true, I know no nobler form for the activity of the most perfect being, than Art. But you seem to have overlooked an important difference. The universe is no mere embodiment of an ideal, like the completed work of a human artist. The latter rules despotically over the dead matter which he uses for the representations of his ideas. But in the work of divine art, the peculiar value of each of its elements is preserved, and that sustaining glance which He vouchsafes to each germ of energy, even in the smallest creature, glorifies the Master as much as the harmony of the boundless whole. Life and Freedom, in the greatest possible extent, is the seal of divine creation. It is never more sublime, than where its ideal seems most to be deficient. But in our present limitations we cannot embrace this loftier perfection. We survey too small a part of the universe, and our ear cannot detect the ultimate chord of its vast crowd of dissonances. Each step which we mount in the scale of being, will make us more susceptible for this scientific pleasure, but even then it possesses value only as a *means*, only so far as it inspires us with a like activity. Idle astonishment at some far distant greatness can never possess a lofty

merit. Neither material for his agency, nor power, can be wanting to the nobler man, to become himself a Creator in his own sphere. And this vocation is yours also, Julius. Once discern this fact, and you will never again mourn over the barriers, which your thirst for knowledge cannot surpass.

And this is the period which I await, in order to see you completely reconciled with me. The extent of your powers must first be fully recognised by you, before you can estimate the value of their freest utterance. Till then, be still angry with me, only distrust not yourself.

UPON THE

ÆSTHETIC CULTURE OF MAN.

SERIES OF LETTERS.



# ÆSTHETIC CULTURE.

## FIRST LETTER.

By your permission I lay before you, in a series of letters, the results of my researches upon beauty and art. I am feelingly sensible of the importance, but still not less of the charm and dignity of this undertaking. I shall speak of a subject, which is immediately related to the better portion of our happiness, and stands in close connexion with the moral nobility of human nature. I shall plead the cause of beauty before a heart, by which her whole power is felt and exercised, and which will take upon itself the severest part of my labour, in an investigation where one is compelled to appeal as often to feelings as to principles.

That which I would have asked as a favour, you generously propose as a duty; thus leaving to me the appearance of a service, where I only consult my inclination. The freedom of motion, which you prescribe to me, I find no constraint, but rather a necessity. Little practised in the use of formal rules, I shall hardly be in danger of sinning against good taste, by any abuse of them. My ideas, drawn rather from an uniform converse with myself, than from a rich experience, or from reading, will not deny their origin; they will sooner be guilty of any error than of sectarianism, and will rather fall from their own weakness, than maintain themselves by authority and foreign strength.

I will not conceal from you that the following affirmations will rest, for the most part, upon Kantian principles; but if, in the course of these investigations, you should ever be reminded of some particular school of philosophy, ascribe it to my incapacity, not to those principles. No, the freedom of your mind shall be inviolable to me; your own sensibility will furnish me the data upon which I build; your own free thought will dictate the laws, in conformity with which I shall proceed.

Only philosophers disagree concerning those ideas which predominate in the practical part of the Kantian system, but I am confident of showing that mankind have never done so! When extricated from their technical form, they become as the prescriptive claims of the common reason, and appear as data of the moral instinct, which nature places before man as a model, till clear insight gives him his maturity. But this very technical form, which makes the truth plain to the understanding, conceals it from the feeling: for alas! the understanding can only appropriate the object of the inner sense, by first destroying it. The philosopher, like the chymist, finds union only by means of dissolution, and the work of spontaneous nature only through the torture of art. In order to detain the fleeting phenomenon, he must bind it in the fetters of rule, present its fair body in dismembered conceptions, and preserve its living spirit in a meagre skeleton of words. Is it wonderful that the native feeling does not recognise itself in such a copy, and that truth appears as paradox in the report of the analyst?

Therefore may I crave your indulgence, if the following investigations should remove their object out of the sphere of sense, while seeking to approximate it to the understanding. What there obtains with respect to moral phenomena, must obtain, in a still higher degree, with respect to the manifestation of beauty. The whole enchantment lies in its mystery, and if the necessary union of its elements is dissolved, so also is its essence.

## SECOND LETTER.

BUT ought I not to make a better use of the liberty which you have granted me, than to engage your attention upon the theatre of the fine arts? Is it not at least unseasonable to look around after a statute book for the æsthetic world, when the affairs of the moral world excite an interest so much keener, and the circumstances of the times call so pressingly upon the spirit of philosophical inquiry, to engage in the most perfect of all works of art—the erection of a true political freedom?

I would fain not live in, or labour for, another century. One is a good citizen of the age, only so far as he is a good citizen of the state; and when it is found unseemly, nay, inadmissible, to withdraw from the manners and customs of the circle in which we live, why should we esteem it a less duty to allow the need and the taste of the century a voice in our choice of activity?

But this voice seems by no means to decide in favour of art; not, at least, of that special phase, to which alone my investigations will be directed. The course of events has given the spirit of the age a direction, which threatens to remove it farther and farther from ideal art. This must abandon reality, and rise with decent boldness above necessity; for art is a daughter of freedom, and must receive her commission from the needs of the spirit, not from the exigencies of matter.

But now necessity rules, and depresses fallen humanity beneath its tyrannical yoke. Utility is the great idol of the



age, to which all powers stoop and all talents do homage. The spiritual merit of art has no weight in its clumsy balance, and, robbed of every incitement, flees from the century's noisy mart. The spirit of philosophical inquiry itself seizes one province of the imagination after another, and the limits of art diminish the more those of science are enlarged.

The eyes of the philosopher and the man of the world are turned, full of expectation, towards the political arena, where, as is believed, the great destiny of humanity is now developed. Does it not betray a censurable indifference to the welfare of society, not to share this universal discourse? So nearly does this great action, on account of its tenor and results, approach every one who calls himself a man, so must it especially interest the self-thinker, on account of his profession. A question, which otherwise only the blind right of the strongest will answer, is apparently now pending before the tribunal of pure reason, and whoever is only capable of placing himself in the centre of the whole, and of substituting his individuality for the race, may consider himself as a judge in this court of reason; while at the same time, as a man and citizen of the world, he is a party, and perceives himself more or less intimately implicated in the result. Thus it is not only his own case, which awaits decision in this great action; it must also be judged according to laws, which, as a rational being, he himself is able and entitled to dictate.

How attractive would it be for me, to push my researches into such a subject, with such an ingenious thinker as well as liberal cosmopolite, and to surrender the decision to a heart, consecrated with a fine enthusiasm to the welfare of humanity! What an agreeable surprise, to meet your unbiassed spirit in the same result on the field of ideas, in spite of the great diversity of station, and the wide difference which circumstances in the actual world make necessary! If I resist this attractive experiment, and suffer Beauty to precede Freedom, I trust not only to accommodate it to my inclination, but to vindicate it by principles. I hope to convince you, that this

matter is far less foreign to the wants than to the taste of the age; nay more, that in order to solve this political problem in experience, one must pass through the æsthetic, since it is Beauty that leads to Freedom. But this argument cannot be pursued until I remind you of the principles, by which generally the reason guides itself in political legislation.

### THIRD LETTER.

NATURE commences with man no better than with her other works; she acts for him where he cannot yet act as a free intelligence. But this fact creates him a man, that he does not rest satisfied with the results of mere nature, but possesses the capacity to retrace with his reason the steps taken with nature in anticipation, to transform the work of need into the work of his own free choice, and to elevate physical—into moral necessity.

Awaking from a sensuous slumber, he recognises himself as a man, looks around and finds himself—in the state. An unavoidable exigency placed him in this position, before he could choose it in his freedom; need shaped his course according to the bare laws of nature, before he could conform it to the laws of reason. But as a moral person he could and cannot be content—alas for him, if he could—with this forced condition, which only resulted from his natural destination, and is only to be estimated as such! Therefore, in that right by which he is a man, he forsakes the dominion of a blind necessity, since in so many other points he is estranged from it by his freedom; since, only to give one example, he effaces by morality, and ennobles by beauty, the low character which the need of sexual love impressed. Thus in his maturity he artistically recalls his childhood, constructs a *state of nature* in idea—which indeed no experience has given him, but is the necessary result of his reasoning process—borrows in this ideal state an aim, which he knew not in his actual state of nature, and a choice, for which he was once incompetent; and now he conducts no differently than if he began from the first, with the state of mere contract exchanged for the state of

independence, arising from a clear insight and a free resolve. However artfully and firmly a blind caprice may have secured its work, however arrogantly it may maintain it, or cast around it whatsoever appearance of respect, he may consider it as completely undone by this operation; for the work of blind power possesses no authority before which Freedom need to bend, and everything 'must conform to the highest aim which the personal reason proposes. In this way originates the attempt of a people in its majority, to transform its state of nature into a moral state: and in this way the attempt is vindicated by success.

This state of nature—which is that of every political body whose organization springs originally from force and not from law—is indeed opposed to the moral man, with whom mere conformity should serve as a law, but it is quite adequate to the physical man, who only gives himself laws in order to adapt himself to forces. But the physical man is *actual*, and the moral man only *problematic*. If then the reason abolishes the state of nature, as she necessarily must, to substitute her own state in place of it, she risks the physical and actual man for the problematic moral man, the existence of society for a merely possible (though morally necessary) ideal of society. She takes from man something that he really possesses, and without which he has nothing, and, in place of it, directs him to something that he could and should possess: and should she count too much upon him, instead of gaining a humanity, which he still needs, and may continue to need without danger to his existence, he would lose even the means for animality, which is yet the condition for a future humanity. Before he has had time to unite himself firmly by force of will, to the law, she has drawn the ladder of nature from under his feet.

It is then highly doubtful, whether the physical society *in time* could cease for a single instant, while the moral society fashioned itself *in idea*, without hazarding man's existence for the sake of his dignity. If the artist has a clock to mend, he

suffers the wheels to run down; but the living clockwork of the state must be repaired while it is in motion—the wheel must be changed during its revolution. Then we must go in quest of such a support for the continuation of society, as makes it independent of the state of nature, which we would abolish.

This support is not to be found in the natural character of man, selfish and violent, rather bent upon the destruction than the conservation of society: as little is it to be found in his moral character, which according to the supposition, is yet to be fashioned, and upon which, while it is free *and never apparent*, the legislator can neither have influence, nor depend with safety. Then the task that devolves is this—to separate caprice from the physical, and freedom from the moral, character; to harmonize the former with laws, and make the latter dependent upon impressions; to remove the former somewhat farther from the outward, and bring the latter nearer to it, in order to create a third character, which, related to both of them, may construct a passage from the dominion of mere force to the dominion of law, and without retarding the development of the moral character, may serve as a sensible pledge of it, still formless and unseen.

## FOURTH LETTER.

So much is certain: only the preponderance of such a character among a people, can complete without peril the transformation of a state according to moral principles, and only such a character can warrant its perpetuity. In the creation of a moral state, the moral law is reckoned upon as an active power, and the free will is drawn into the realm of causes, where all things depend upon each other with severe necessity and stability. But we know that the determinations of the human will always remain contingent, and that physical and moral necessity coincide only in the absolute being. If then a calculation could be made upon the moral conduct of a man, as upon *natural* results, it must *be* nature, and his instinct must already lead him to such a demeanour as a moral character alone can have as its result. But the will of man stands perfectly free between duty and inclination, and no physical constraint can or may encroach upon this royal right of his person. Will he then retain this power of choice, and be not the less a positive quantity in the causal connexion of powers, he can only effect it when the operations of both those instincts in the sphere of phenomena take place in perfect equilibrium, and the subject-matter of his volition remains the same amid every variety in form, so that his motives are in sufficient unison with his reason, to be available for an universal legislation.

Each individual man, we can say, bears, in disposition and determination, a pure ideal man within himself; and the great task of his existence is to harmonize in all his variety with its

unalterable unity.\* This pure man, which may be recognised more or less distinctly in each subject, is represented by the state—the objective and, so to speak, canonical form, in which the manifoldness of the subject strives to unite. But now two methods are supposable, by which the phenomenal man can coincide with the ideal man, consequently just as many, by which the state can affirm itself in individuals: either by the suppression of the empirical by the rational man, the nullification of individuals by the state, or by the individual *becoming* the state, by the phenomenal man *ennobling himself* to the ideal man.

It is true, this distinction subsides when we make a partial moral estimate; for the reason is content if her law only has an unconditional value. But, in a complete anthropological estimate, where subject-matter as well as form is reckoned, and the active sentiment also has a voice, that distinction is all the more notable. It is true, the reason demands unity, but nature demands variety, and both claim to legislate for man. The law of the former is impressed upon him by an incorruptible consciousness, the law of the latter by an indelible perception. Hence it will continually testify, by an education yet deficient, if the moral character can maintain itself only at the sacrifice of the natural: and a government, which is only in a condition to effect unity by the abolition of variety, will still remain very incomplete. The state should not only respect in the individual the objective and generic, but also the subjective and specific; and must not dispeople the realm of phenomena, while extending the unseen realm of morals.

If the mechanical artist puts his hand to the shapeless mass, to give it the form of his design, he does not hesitate to force

\* I will refer here to a work lately published—Lecture upon the Destiny of the Scholar, by my friend Fichte, in which may be found a very luminous and hitherto, in this way, unattempted treatment of this principle.

it to his purpose; for the raw material which he elaborates, demands no respect for itself, and the whole does not concern him for the sake of the parts, but the parts for the sake of the whole. If the liberal artist puts his hand to the same mass, he hesitates as little to do it violence, only he is careful lest it should be apparent. He does not in the least, any more than the mechanical artist, respect the raw material which he elaborates; but he will seek to deceive the eye, which is not satisfied unless the freedom of the material be preserved, by an apparent conformity thereto. Quite otherwise is it with the pedagogical and political artist, who uses man at once as material and as object. Here the design reverts to the material, and the parts need to be adapted to the whole, only because the whole serves the parts. But the state-artist must approach his material, with a regard quite different from that which the liberal artist feigns for his: he must preserve its distinctive and personal nature, not only subjectively, and for a deceptive effect upon the senses, but objectively, and for its real essence and effect.

But for the reason that the state ought to be an organization, framed through and for itself, it can only be realized so far as the parts have tuned themselves to the idea of the whole. Since the state serves to represent the pure and objective humanity in the breast of its citizens, it must preserve the same relation towards its citizens, in which they stand to themselves, and only in proportion as their subjective humanity has been made objective, can it command respect. If the inner man is at one with himself, he will preserve his distinctive character in the widest universality of his expression, and the state will only be the interpreter of his fine instinct, the more intelligible formula of his internal legislation. But if on the contrary, in the character of a people, the subjective man sets himself in such distinct opposition to the objective, that only the suppression of the former can secure to the latter a triumph, then the state must engage the stern gravity of law against the citizen, and trample down without respect or



favour an individuality so hostile, in order not to be its victim.

Man can be self-opposed in a twofold manner; either as savage, if his feelings rule his principles, or as barbarian, if his principles destroy his feelings. The savage despises art, and recognises nature as his absolute monarch; the barbarian mocks and dishonours nature, but, with a meanness unknown to the savage, he not unfrequently continues to be the slave of his slave. The civilized man makes a friend of nature, and respects her freedom, while he curbs only her caprice.

Then, if reason introduces its moral unity into physical society, it need not injure the manifoldness of nature. If nature strives to assert her manifoldness in the moral structure of society, she need bring no detriment thereby to moral unity; the golden product, the final expression rests equidistant from uniformity and confusion. Then *totality* of character must be found in a people, who would be capable and worthy of exchanging the state of necessity for the state of freedom.

## FIFTH LETTER.

Is this the character, which the present age and occurrences manifest to us? My attention is immediately arrested by the most prominent object in this ample picture.

It is true, that respect for opinion has fallen, caprice is unmasked, and though still armed with power, purloins no longer any dignity: man is aroused from his long indolence and self deception, and demands with an overwhelming majority the restitution of his inalienable rights. But not merely demands them; he bestirs himself on every side, to take by force what in his opinion has been denied to him unjustly. The fabric of a natural state is tottering, its brittle foundations are weakened, and a *physical* possibility appears granted to place law upon the throne, at length to honour man as himself his final aim, and to make true freedom the basis of political union. Empty hopes! *Moral* possibility is wanting, and the favourable moment finds an unsusceptible race.

Man portrays himself in his deeds, and what a form is that which is presented in the drama of the present age! Barrenness here, license there; the two extremes of human decline, and both united in a single period.

Crude and lawless instincts exhibit themselves in the lower and more numerous classes, freeing themselves with the dissolved restraint of civil order, and hastening with ungovernable madness to a state of brutal satisfaction. However it may be, that objective humanity has had reason to complain of the state, the subjective must respect its institutions. Need one blame it for disregarding the dignity of human nature, so long

as it was necessary to maintain its own existence—for hastening to separate by mere force of repulsion, and unite by cohesion, where as yet no power of culture existed? Its vindication is contained in its dissolution. Society uncontrolled, instead of speeding upwards to organic life, falls back to its original elements.

On the other side, the enlightened classes present the opposite aspect of laxness and a depravation of character, which is so much the more revolting, since culture itself is the source. I forget, what ancient or modern philosopher remarks, that the noblest is the vilest in its downfall; it is true also in a moral sense. A son of nature becomes, in his decline, quite frantic; a disciple of art contemptible. The intellectual illumination, which forms the boast, not wholly groundless, of the polished classes, evinces on the whole an influence on the disposition so little ennobling, that it rather lends maxims to strengthen the depravity. We disown nature in her proper sphere, in order to feel her tyranny in the moral, and while we struggle against her impressions, we borrow thence our principles. The affected decency of our manners denies to her the venial *first* voice, that we may cede to her the decisive *last* one, in our material ethics. Selfishness has founded its system in the lap of the most refined sociality, and we experience all the contagions and calamities of society, without extracting therefrom truly kind affections. We submit our own free judgement to its despotic opinion, our feelings to its fantastic customs, our wills to its seductions; and maintain only our caprice against its solemn rights. Proud self-sufficiency contracts, in the worldling, the heart that so often beats with sympathy in a child of nature; just as each one in a burning city seeks to save only his own pitiful property from the desolation. Only in a complete abjuration of sensibility, can one find protection against its abuses, and the jest, which often bestows salutary chastisement upon the fanatic, lacerates as unrelentlessly the noblest feelings. Civilization, far from placing us in freedom, only unfolds a new want with every power that it educates within

us; the bonds of the physical pinch more and more painfully, so that the fear of losing smothers even the earnest desire for improvement, and the maxim of passive obedience passes for the highest wisdom of life. In fine, we behold the spirit of the age wavering between perverseness and rudeness, between extravagance and mere nature, between superstition and moral disbelief, and it is only the equiponderance of ill, that ever defines its limits.

## SIXTH LETTER.

HAS my delineation of the age been overwrought? I do not expect this objection, but rather another—that I have proved too much. This picture, you say to me, certainly resembles present humanity, but it resembles, too, all people, who are in the process of cultivation, since all without difference must fall from nature by an over-refined intellectuality, before they can return to her again through the reason.

But with some attention to the character of the age one must be surprised at the contrast, that will be evident between the present form of humanity and that of former times, particularly the Grecian. The credit of cultivation and refinement, which we justly make the most of against every mere state of nature, cannot avail us with the Grecian nature, which united all the attractions of art with all the dignity of wisdom, without, as ourselves, becoming its victim. The Greeks shame us not only by a simplicity, to which our age is a stranger; they are at the same time our rivals, nay, often our model in that very pre-eminence, with which we are wont to console ourselves for the native perverseness of our manners. At once objective and subjective, at once philosophic and creative, tender and energetic, we behold the youth of fancy united in a noble humanity to the manliness of reason.

In the beautiful awaking of the spiritual powers, at that period, sense and spirit had no strongly marked peculiarity; no dispute had yet constrained them to withdraw in hostile manner from each other, and define their boundaries. Poesy had not yet contended with wif and speculation had not dis-

graced itself by craft. In case of need both could exchange their functions, since each revered truth, after its own fashion. However high reason soared, it ever lovingly lifted the outward after it, and however finely and sharply it discriminated, still it never lacerated. It is true, it analyzed human nature, and threw its amplified elements into the majestic circle of divinities, but not thereby tearing it in pieces, only mingling it diversely, since a complete humanity was wanting in no single god. How entirely different with us moderns! With us too the type of the race is thrown, in parts that are amplified, into individuals, but in fragments, not in different combinations, so that one must inquire from individual to individual, in order to read collectively the totality of the race. With us, one is almost tempted to affirm, the powers of the mind display themselves in experience detached, as they are represented by the psychologist, and we see not only single subjects, but whole classes of men developing only one part of their dispositions, while the remainder, like stunted plants, preserve vestiges of their nature almost too feeble to be recognised.

I do not fail to see the superiority which the present race, considered as a unit and on the ground of intellect, may assert before the best of past time; but it must undertake the contest with isolated members, and compare a whole with a whole. What single modern steps forth, man to man, to strive for the prize of humanity with a single Athenian?

Whence then, with every advantage of the race, this disadvantageous relation of individuals? In what consisted the qualifications of a single Grecian to represent his time, and why may not a single modern attempt the same? Because all-uniting nature had imparted her forms to the former, and all-dividing intellect her own to the latter.

It was culture itself which dealt modern humanity this wound. As soon as extended experience and more precise speculation made a nicer distinction of sciences necessary on the one hand, and the more complicated machinery of the state a more rigorous separation of rank and occupation on the other,

the essential tie of human nature was rent, and a destructive warfare raged between harmonious powers. The intuitive and the speculative intellect assumed hostile attitudes on their respective fields, whose boundaries they now began to watch with jealousy and distrust; and man, in confining his efficiency to a single sphere, has created for himself a master which not seldom, by overbearing, is wont to extinguish the remaining character. While here a riotous imagination desolates the hard-earned fruits of the intellect, there the fire of abstraction consumes, when it should have expanded the heart and inflamed the fancy.

The new spirit of government made complete and universal this disorder which art and learning commenced in the inner man. Indeed, it was not to be expected, that the artless organization of the first republics should survive the simplicity of original manners and circumstances, but, instead of reaching a more elevated animal life, it degenerated into a common and clumsy mechanism. That polypus-nature of the Grecian states, where each individual enjoyed an independent existence, and in case of need, could act with the whole, now gives place to an ingenious engineering, in which a mechanical life forms itself as a whole, from the patchwork of innumerable, but lifeless parts. The state and church, laws and customs, are now rent asunder; enjoyment is separated from labour, the means from the end, exertion from recompense. Eternally *jittered* only to a single little fragment of the whole, man fashions himself only as a fragment; ever hearing only the monotonous whirl of the wheel which he turns, he never displays the full harmony of his being, and, instead of coining the humanity that lies in his nature, he is content with a mere impression of his occupation, his science. But even the scanty fragmentary portion, which still binds single members to the whole, depends not upon forms that present themselves spontaneously (for what reliance could be placed upon a mechanism of their freedom so artificial and clandestine?) but is assigned to them with scrupulous exactness by formularies, to

which the free discernment of each one is restricted. The dead letter represents the living intellect, and a hackneyed memory is a safer guide than genius and feeling.

If the commonwealth makes the function the unit-measure of a man, if it respects in one of its citizens only memory, in another an epitomized intellect, in a third only mechanical activity ; if, indifferent to the character, it lays stress here only upon knowledge, there on the contrary esteems the greatest obscuration of the understanding equivalent to a spirit of order and a legitimate demeanour—if at the same time, it requires these single modes of action pushed to a great intensity, while a proportionate extension is not demanded of the subject—need it surprise us, that the remaining powers of the mind are neglected, in order to bestow every attention upon the single one which is respected and recompensed ? It is true, we know, that vigorous genius does not make the limits of its occupation circumscribe its activity, but moderate talent consumes the whole scanty sum of its powers, in the occupation that has fallen to its lot, and it must be, no common head, that can encourage all its partialities, without detriment to its vocation. Moreover, it is seldom a good recommendation to the state, if the powers transcend their commission, or if the deeper spiritual want of the man of genius gives a rival to his business. So jealous is the state for the sole possession of its servants, that it would sooner determine (and who can blame it?) to share him with a Venus Cytherea than with a Venus Urania.

And so gradually the single concrete life decays, that the abstract life of the whole may continue its precarious existence, and the state always remains a stranger to its citizens, since feeling never connects them with it. The governing part, compelled to lessen the manifoldness of its citizens, by classification, and to receive humanity at second hand only through representation, at last entirely overlooks it, confounding it with a mere composition of intellect ; and the governed cannot receive but with coldness the laws that are so little adapted to them. Finally, tired of maintaining an alliance, so little



facilitated by the state, positive society results in a moral state of nature (long ago the fate of most European states), where open force makes only one party *more*, hated and eluded by that which makes it necessary, and only respected by that which can dispense with it.

Could humanity, beneath this twofold tyranny which presses it from within and without, well take any other direction, than it actually has taken? While the speculative spirit strives after inalienable possessions in the realm of idea, it must be a stranger in the world of sense, and relinquish the matter for the form. The spirit of business, confined within a uniform circle of objects, and in this still more circumscribed by formulas, must lose cognizance of the independent whole, daily becoming more impoverished in its sphere. Thus while the one attempts to model the actual according to the speculative, and to elevate its subjective abstract conditions into constitutional laws for the existence of things, the other hastens in the opposite extreme, to estimate generally all experience according to a particular fragment of experience, and to apply the rules of *its own* occupation to every-occupation without distinction. The former must become the prey of an empty subtilty, the latter of a pedantic narrowness, since the one was too high for the partial, the other too low for the whole.

But the detriment of this mental tendency is not confined to knowledge and production, it extends no less to perception and action. We know, that the sensibility of the mind depends for its degree upon the vivacity, for its extent upon the richness, of the imagination. But the preponderance of the analytic faculty must necessarily deprive the fancy of its power and fire, and a limited sphere of objects must diminish its richness. Hence the abstract thinker often has a *cold* heart, since he analyzes the impressions, which only affect the soul as a whole; the man of business has often a *narrow* heart, since his imagination, invested by the uniform routine of his avocation, cannot enlarge itself to a foreign mode of conception.

It lay in my way, to show the pernicious tendency of the character of the age and its source, not the advantages whereby nature makes compensation. I freely assert, that, however little this dismemberment of being can benefit individuals, the race could have made progress in no other manner. The phenomenon of Grecian humanity was undoubtedly a maximum, which could neither be maintained nor surpassed. Not maintained, because the intellect must infallibly have been impelled, by the stock which it already had, to desert sensation and intuition, and strive after distinctness of knowledge; and not surpassed, because only a certain degree of clearness can consist with a certain fulness and warmth. The Greeks had attained this degree, and if they had desired to realize a higher cultivation, they must have surrendered, like ourselves, the totality of their being, and pursued truth through diverse by-paths.

There was no other method of developing man's manifold dispositions, than by placing them in opposition. This antagonism of powers is the great instrument of culture, but still only the instrument; for so long as the antagonism lasts, one is only on the way to culture. The single powers of man isolate themselves and arrogate an exclusive legislation; and for this reason alone, they are found at variance with the truth of things, and compel the common sense, which usually rests with idle satisfaction in outward appearances, to press into the depths of objects. While the pure intellect usurps an authority in the external world, and the empirical is employed in subjecting it to the conditions of experience, both dispositions expand to their utmost ripeness, and exhaust the whole extent of their sphere. While in one the imagination dares to dissolve by its caprice the universal order, it compels in the other the reason to climb to the highest sources of knowledge, and to call in aid against it the law of necessity.

Partiality in the exercise of powers leads, it is true, the individual inevitably into error, but the race to truth. We concentrate the whole energy of our spirit in one focus, and draw

together our whole being into a single power, and for this reason alone, we bestow as it were wings upon this single power, and bear it ingeniously far over the limits which nature seems to have imposed upon it. As certain as that all human individuals combined, with the powers of vision that nature has bestowed upon them, could never succeed in discovering a satellite of Jupiter, which the astronomer's telescope reveals ; just so certain is it, that human reflection would never have conducted an analysis of the infinite or a criticism of pure reason, if the reason had not apportioned itself to single kindred subjects, freed as it were from all matter, and had not strengthened its glance into the absolute by the highest effort of abstraction. But in fact would such a spirit, dissolved in pure intellect and contemplation, be fit to exchange for the stern fetters of logic the free gait of imagination, and to comprehend the individuality of things with just and pure perception ? Here nature places limits to universal genius, which it cannot transgress, and the truth will make martyrs so long as philosophy makes its chief business the laying down regulations against error.

Thus, however much may be gained for the world as a whole by this fragmentary cultivation, it is not to be denied, that the individuals whom it befalls, are cursed for the benefit of the world. An athletic frame, it is true, is fashioned by gymnastic exercises, but a form of beauty only by free and uniform action. Just so the exertions of single talents can create extraordinary men indeed, but happy and perfect men only by their uniform temperature. And in what relation should we stand then to the past and coming age, if the cultivation of human nature made necessary such a sacrifice ? We should have been the slaves of humanity, and drudged for her century after century, and stamped upon our mutilated natures the humiliating traces of our bondage—that the coming race might nurse its moral healthfulness in blissful leisure, and unfold the free growth of its humanity !

But can it be intended that man should neglect himself for

any particular design? Ought nature to deprive us by its design of a perfection, which reason by its own prescribes to us? Then it must be false that the development of single faculties makes the sacrifice of totality necessary; or, if indeed the law of nature presses thus heavily, it becomes us to restore by a higher art, this totality in our nature which art has destroyed.

## SEVENTH LETTER.

SHOULD we look for this effect from the state? That is impossible, since the state as at present constituted, has induced the evil, and the state which the reason presents to itself in idea, instead of being able to found this improved humanity, must first be founded thereon itself. And so my researches hitherto have led me back to the point, from which they drew me for a time. The present age, far from exhibiting to us such a form of humanity, as is known to be the necessary condition for a moral reform of the state, shows us rather the direct opposite. Then if the principles laid down by me are accurate, and experience sanctions my sketch of the present, it is evident that every experiment in such a reform is so long premature, and every hope founded thereon chimerical, till the divisions of the inner man are again abolished, and his nature is so far developed, that she herself may be the artist, and warrant the reality of the reason's political creation.

Nature traces out for us in the physical, the way we should pursue in the moral creation. She does not apply herself to the noble formation of the physical man, till she has quieted the strife of elementary powers in the lower organizations. Just so must the strife of elements in the ethical man, the conflict of blind instincts, be first appeased, and stupid opposition must have ceased in him, before he can venture to gratify his manifoldness. On the other side, the self-dependence of his character must be secured, and the subjection of a becoming freedom to external, despotic forms must be abolished, before he can submit his manifoldness to the unit of the ideal. Where the child of nature still abuses his caprice so lawlessly, one hardly need

point out to him his freedom; where the educated man still neglects his freedom, one need not deprive him of his caprice. The gift of liberal principles is treason to the whole, if it joins itself to a power that is still tumultuous, and strengthens an already superior nature; the law of conformity becomes tyranny to the individual, when it is combined with an already prevailing weakness and physical constraint, thus quenching the last glimmering sparks of self-activity and possession.

The character of the age then must first recover from its deep abasement; in one quarter, nature must resign its blind force, and in another return to its simplicity, truth and fulness; the work of more than a century. In the meantime, I readily allow, that many isolated experiments can succeed, but on the whole, nothing will be thereby gained, and the contradiction of conduct with the unity of maxims will be continually manifest. In the other hemisphere, humanity will be respected in the negro, and in Europe disgraced in the thinker. The old principles will remain, but they will wear the dress of the century, and philosophy will lend her name to an oppression, which once the church authorized. In one quarter men will throw themselves into the arms of a convenient bondage, terrified at the freedom which always declared itself inimical in their first essays; and in another, stung to desperation by a pedantic *guardianship*, will escape to the wild licentiousness of a state of nature. Usurpation will appeal to the infirmity of human nature, insurrection to its dignity, till finally brute force, the great mistress of all human things, interferes, and decides the sham contest of principles like a common boxing-match.

## EIGHTH LETTER.

SHALL philosophy retire then from this sphere, dejected and despairing? While the dominion of forms extends itself in every other direction, shall this greatest of all possessions be surrendered to arbitrary chance? Will the conflict of blind forces endure for ever in the political world, and hostile selfishness never succumb to social law?

By no means! Reason, it is true, will not immediately attempt a struggle with this brutal force which resists its weapons, nor appear upon the gloomy arena unsustained, any more than the son of Saturn in the Iliad. But it elects the worthiest from the crowd of combatants, arrays him as Jupiter did his grandson, in divine armour, and through his conquering might accomplishes the high resolve.

Reason has performed all it can perform, when it discovers and exhibits the law; the courageous will and lively feeling must execute it. If truth would conquer in the warfare with force, itself must first *become* a force, and furnish an *impulse* to its counsel in the realm of phenomena; since impulses are the only inciting powers in the world of sensation. If truth has hitherto shown its superiority but little, it is not the fault of the intellect, which knew not how to unveil it, but of the heart which closed itself against it, and of the impulses which refused to lend their activity.

Then with all the conspicuous lights of philosophy and experience, whence is this still universal influence of prejudice, and this beclouded understanding? The age is enlightened, that is, those sciences are discovered and laid open, which are at least adequate to direct our practical principles. The spirit

of free inquiry has destroyed the false conceptions, which long obstructed the passage to truth, and has undermined the foundation on which fanaticism and fraud had reared their throne. Reason has purged itself from the illusions of sense and of a deceitful sophistry, and philosophy itself, which at first seduced us from our allegiance, loudly and pressingly calls us back to the bosom of nature. Why is it that we are still barbarians?

Thus there must be something existing in the dispositions of men, since it lies not in things, which impedes the reception of truth, though ever so forcibly convincing or luminous. An ancient sage has detected it, and it lies concealed in the significant expression, *sapere aude*.

Dare to be wise. Energy of spirit is requisite to overcome the obstructions which faint-heartedness as well as the indolence of nature oppose to education. Not without a significance did the goddess of wisdom in the old fable, step in full armour from the head of Jupiter; since her first occupation is warlike. At her very birth she has to maintain a hard contest with the senses, who will not be torn from their sweet repose. The more numerous part of mankind are too much harrassed and exhausted by the contest with need, ever to gird themselves for a new and sterner contest with error. Contented to escape the tedious toil of reflection, they willingly submit their ideas to the guardianship of others; and should it happen that higher wants stimulate them, they embrace with eager faith the forms which the state and priesthood hold in readiness for this emergency. If these unhappy men demand our pity, so our just contempt lights upon those others whom a better lot frees from the yoke of need, which they bear from their own choice. Where feeling is most lively, and fancy frames at will convenient images, they draw the twilight of indistinct conceptions before the rays of truth, which chase away the fond delusion of their dreams. They found the whole structure of their happiness upon those very deceptions which the hostile light of knowledge should disperse, and they ought to purchase that



truth so dear, which commences by depriving them of all that they valued. They must already be wise, in order to love wisdom; a truth, which he indeed felt, who gave philosophy its name.

Therefore it is not enough that all intellectual improvement deserves our regard only so far as it flows back upon the character; it must in a manner proceed *from* the character, since the way to the head must be opened through the heart. Cultivation of the perceptive faculty is then the most pressing want of the age, not only as a means to make a practical application of an improved insight, but for its own sake, because it prompts to this improvement of insight.

## NINTH LETTER.

BUT are we not proceeding in a circle? Must theoretical culture precede the practical, and yet the latter be the condition of the former? All political improvements should result from nobility of character—but how can the character ennoble itself under the influence of a barbarous civil polity? We must find then an instrument for this design, which the state does not afford, and lay open sources, which preserve themselves pure and undefiled in every political depravation.

I have now reached the point, to which all my previous meditations have tended. This instrument is the fine arts; those sources are displayed in their undying models.

Art, like knowledge, is independent of everything that is positive or established by human conventions, and both enjoy an absolute immunity from the caprice of men. The political lawgiver can encroach upon its province, but he cannot govern there. He can outlaw the friend of truth, but truth remains; he can humble the artist, but cannot debase the art. It is true, nothing is more common, than that both science and art should do homage to the spirit of the age, whose judgments give the tone to the prevailing taste. Where the character is tense and hardened, we see science watching narrowly its limits, and art moving in the galling fetters of rule; where the character is relaxed and dissolute, science strives to satisfy and art to delight. Whole centuries have shown philosophers as well as artists busied in immersing truth and beauty in the depths of a vulgar humanity; the former sink, but the latter struggles up victoriously in her own indestructible energy.

It is true, the artist is the son of his time, but alas for him,

if he is likewise its pupil, or even favourite. Let a kind divinity snatch the suckling betimes from his mother's breast, nourish him with the milk of a better age, and let him come to maturity beneath a distant Grecian sky. Then when he has become a man, let him return, a foreign shape, into his century; not to delight it with his appearance, but terrible, like Agamemnon's son, to purify it. He will take his material, indeed, from the present, but borrow his form from a nobler time, nay, from beyond all time, from the absolute, unchangeable unity of his being. Here, from the pure ether of his divine nature, runs down the fountain of Beauty, undefiled by the corruption of races and times, which fret far beneath him in troubled whirlpools. Whim can dishonour his material, as it has ennobled it, but the chaste form is removed from its vicissitudes. The Roman of the first century had long bent the knee before the purple, but the statues still stood erect; the temple remained holy to the eyes long after the gods had served for laughter; and the atrocities of a Nero and Commodus disgraced the noble style of the edifice, that lent to them its concealment. Humanity has lost its dignity, but art has rescued and preserved it in significant marbles; truth survives in the midst of deception, and the original will be restored from the copy. And as noble art survives noble nature, so she precedes it, animating and creating in her inspiration. Before truth sends its triumphant light into the recesses of the heart, the imagination intercepts its rays; and the summit of humanity is radiant, while the damp night still lingers in the valleys.

But how can the artist protect himself from the corruptions of his age, which on all sides surround him? By despising its judgment. Let him look upwards to his dignity and the law, not downwards to his prosperity and his wants. Alike free from the vain activity, that would fain leave its traces on the fleeting moment, and from the impatient enthusiasm, that applies the scale of the absolute to the paltry product of time, let him leave to the understanding, which is here at home,

the sphere of the actual ; but let him strive to evolve the ideal from the union of the possible with the necessary. This let him express in fiction and truth, in the play of his fancy and in the gravity of his deeds, in all sensible and spiritual forms, and cast it silently into infinite time.

But every one whose soul glows with this ideal, does not possess the creative tranquillity and patience, to impress it upon the silent stone, or pour it out in sober words, and commit it to the trusty hands of time. Far too impetuous to preserve this peaceful medium, the divine productive faculty often rushes upon the present and active life, and undertakes to refashion the formless material of the moral world. Human misery speaks appealingly to a feeling man, human degradation still more touchingly ; enthusiasm is enflamed, and ardent longing strives impatiently in the vigorous soul to become a deed. But does he ask himself whether this disorder in the moral world offends his reason, or does not rather grieve his self-love. If he does not yet know it, he will discover it in the zeal with which he labours after definite and accelerated effects. The pure moral instinct seeks the absolute, it has no time ; and the future is as the present, as soon as it necessarily results *from* the present. To an unlimited reason the intention coincides with the fulfilment, and when the course is chosen, it is accomplished.

Then I would say to the young disciple of Truth and Beauty, who would know how to satisfy the noble impulse of his heart, through every opposition of the century, I would say, give the world beneath your influence, a *direction* towards the good, and the tranquil rhythm of time will bring its development. You have given it this direction, if as a teacher you elevate its thoughts to the necessary and eternal ; if, while acting or composing, you transform the necessary and eternal into an object of its impulse. The fabric of error and caprice will fall, it must—nay, it has already fallen, when you are sure that it declines ; but it must decline not only in the outward but in the inner man. Create the conquering truth in the

modest stillness of your soul, array it in a form of beauty, that not only thought may pay it homage, but sense lovingly comprehend its presence. And lest you should chance to take the pattern you would give it from reality, do not venture into its hazardous society, till you are sure of an ideal retinue in your heart. Live *with* your century, but be not its creature ; bestow upon your contemporaries not what they praise, but what they need. Share with a noble resignation their punishment, without sharing their fault, and bend with freedom beneath the yoke, which with equal ill grace they miss or suffer. You will prove to them, by the resolute spirit with which you slight their fortune, how little their misery resulted from your effeminacy. Imagine them as they *should* be, if you are to influence them, but regard them as they *are*, if you are tempted to work for them. Through their dignity seek their approbation, but impute their fortune to their unworthiness ; thus, on the one hand, your own nobility will arouse theirs, and their demerit, on the other, will not annul your design. In the graceful play of your fancy they would tolerate your principles, from whose naked severity they would shrink : their taste is purer than their heart, and here you must seize the timorous inconstant. You will in vain attack their opinions, in vain condemn their deeds, but you can make essay of your forming hand in their leisure. Banish caprice, frivolity, coarseness, from their pleasures, and you will banish them imperceptibly from their actions, finally even from their inclinations. Wherever you find them, encircle them with noble, great and spiritual forms ; invest them with the symbols of all that is excellent, till reality bends to the ideal, and nature to art.

## TENTH LETTER.

THEN you agree with me in this respect, convinced by the contents of my previous letters, that man may be drawn upon two opposite courses from his destination, that our age is actually pursuing both these by-paths, and has fallen a prey, on one side, to rudeness; on the other, to perverseness and relaxation. Beauty must restore it from this twofold confusion; but how can the culture of beauty oppose at once two distinct errors, and unite in itself two most contrary dispositions? Can it fetter nature in the savage, or free it in the barbarian? Can it at the same time bind and loose? and if it does not really accomplish *both*, how can so great an effect as the education of humanity be reasonably expected from her?

Indeed one must have heard to satiety the assertion, that morals are refined by an expanded taste for the beautiful, so that no new proof of this appears to be necessary. We rely upon daily experience, which almost universally shows clearness of intellect, quickness of perception, liberality and even dignity of conduct, united with a cultivated taste, and commonly the very opposite, with a taste that is uncultivated. We appeal with sufficient confidence to the example of the most refined of all the nations of antiquity, with whom the perception of beauty was perfectly developed, and to the contrary example of people partly savage, partly barbarous, who expiate their insensibility to beauty by a rude or austere character. Yet not the less does it sometimes occur to speculators, either to deny the fact, or to doubt the lawfulness of the conclusion. Their opinion of that wildness with which unpolished nations are reproached, is not so utterly bad, nor do they think so.

favourably of that refinement, which is commended in the polished. There were men even in antiquity, who esteemed polite culture by no means a benefit, and therefore were strongly inclined to forbid the introduction of the imaginative arts into their republic.

I speak not of those who only revile the graces, having never experienced their favour. How should they, who know no other measure of worth than the toil of acquisition and its palpable results, be capable of estimating the calm operation of taste upon the outward and inward man, while they regard the fortuitous disadvantages of polite culture, without its essential benefits? The man without perception of form despises all grace in eloquence as corruption, all elegance in conversation as hypocrisy, all delicacy and loftiness of demeanour as exaggeration and affectation. He can never forgive it in the favourite of the graces, that, as a companion, he adorns all circles, as a man of business moulds all heads to his designs, as an author, imprints, perhaps, his spirit on the whole of his century, while *he*, the victim of drudgery, with all his knowledge, can command no attention, nor move so much as a stone from its place. And since he can never acquire from the former the genial secret of being agreeable, nothing else remains for him but to mourn over the perversity of human nature, which honours the appearance more than the substance.

But there are more respectable voices, who declare against the tendencies of beauty, and come prepared with formidable arguments drawn from experience. "It cannot be denied," they say, "that the charms of beauty can subserve praiseworthy designs, in proper hands; but it is equally conformable to their nature, to subserve the very opposite in depraved hands, and to employ their fascinating power in the service of error and wickedness. For the reason that taste respects not the substance but only the form, it gives the mind at last a dangerous tendency to neglect, for the most part, all reality, and to sacrifice truth and morality for an attractive exterior. It confounds all actual distinctions of things, and attaches merit

only to appearance. How many gifted men," they continue, "are seduced from a serious and steady activity by the alluring potency of Beauty, or at least to dissipate their powers! How many weak intellects are for this reason alone at variance with homely reality, since it pleases the fancy of poets to portray a world where everything wears a different aspect, where no expediency binds opinion, no art subjects nature. What dangerous logic have the passions acquired, since they have been arrayed in the most attractive colours in the poet's painting, and commonly maintain the field in the struggle with principle and duty! What indeed has society gained, since Beauty gives laws to that intercourse which truth once governed, and since the outward impression commands the respect which should only be united to merit. It is true, we now see all the virtues flourish, which strike favourably in appearance, and lend a worth to society; but we behold too all extravagances in full sway, and all vices in vogue which recommend themselves by a fair outside." In fact it must awaken reflection, when we find humanity prostrate in almost every epoch of history, where the arts flourish and taste is supreme; and not a single example occurs, where a high degree and great universality of æsthetic culture has gone hand in hand with political freedom and civil virtue, or refined manners with good manners, or polished demeanour with truth.

So long as Athens and Sparta maintained their independence, and reverence for the laws was the basis of their constitution, taste was immature, art in its infancy, and Beauty was far from swaying the disposition. It is true, poetry had essayed an elevated flight, but only in the soarings of a genius which we know is closely connected with a state of rudeness, and is a light which frequently shines from the midst of darkness; which then testifies rather against than for the taste of its age. As the golden age of art advanced under Pericles and Alexander, and the influence of taste extended more widely, we find no more the Grecian energy and freedom; eloquence adulterated truth, wisdom was an offence in the mouth of a



Socrates, and virtue in the life of a Phocion. The Romans, we know, were obliged to exhaust their strength in civil wars, and enervated by eastern luxury, to bow beneath the yoke of a fortunate dynasty, before we see the triumph of Grecian art over the rigidity of their character. And the dawn of civilization did not break over Arabia, until the energy of its warlike spirit had become relaxed beneath the sceptre of the Abassides. The fine arts did not appear in modern Italy, till the powerful alliance of the Lombards was broken, till Florence had submitted to the Medici, and the spirit of independence in all those vigorous states had given place to inglorious submission. It is well-nigh superfluous to cite the examples of more modern nations, whose refinement increased in proportion to the decrease of their self-dependence. Wherever we turn our eyes in the past, we discover that taste and freedom desert each other, and that Beauty founds her dominion only upon the ruins of heroic virtue.

And yet this very energy of character, with which æsthetic culture is commonly purchased, is the most powerful incentive to all that is great and excellent in man, the want of which no other, though a greater, pre-eminence can supply. Then if one is directed only by that which former experience teaches concerning the influence of Beauty, he can in fact be little encouraged to cultivate feelings which are so dangerous to man's true culture; and would rather dispense with the flattering charm of Beauty, even at the peril of rudeness and austerity, than experience its enervating effects with all the advantages of refinement. But perhaps experience is not the tribunal, before which a question like this should be decided; and before we allow any weight to its testimony, it must first be placed beyond a doubt, that the beauty against which all those former examples bear, is the *same* Beauty concerning which we speak. But this appears to presume a conception of Beauty, drawn from some other source than experience; since by it we shall discover, whether that called so in experience, is justly entitled to its name.

This pure *idea* of Beauty, if such a one can be found, must be sought then, since it can be deduced from no actual case, but rather rectifies and guides our judgment concerning such, by means of abstraction, and can already be inferred from the possibility of the sensuo-rational nature; in a word—Beauty must discover itself to be a necessary condition of humanity. Therefore we must elevate ourselves to a pure conception of humanity, and since experience only discloses single conditions of single men, but never humanity, we must seek to discover from these its individual and changeable modes, the absolute and permanent, and to apprehend the necessary conditions of its being, by a rejection of all accidental limits. This transcendental path will, it is true, separate us for a time from the familiar sphere of phenomena, and from the living present, and delay us on the open field of abstract conceptions. But we strive thence after a stable basis of knowledge, which nothing shall ever agitate. He who never ventures beyond the actual, will never make a prize of truth.

## ELEVENTH LETTER.

WHEN abstraction mounts to the limit of its power, it attains to two ultimate conceptions, beyond which it is impossible to proceed. It distinguishes in man something that is permanent, and something that changes incessantly. It calls the permanent his person, the changeable his condition.

Person and condition—self and its definitions—which we consider as one and the same in the absolute being, are ever two in the finite. The condition varies amid all the stability of the person, the person is unmoved through all the variations of condition. We pass from rest to activity, from passion to indifference, from harmony to contradiction, but we are still the same, and whatever immediately results from us, remains. In the absolute subject alone, all its various modes consist *with* the personality, since they result *from* the personality. The divinity is all that it is, *because* it is; consequently it is all for ever, because it is eternal.

Since in man, as a finite being, person and condition are distinct, so neither can the condition rest upon the person, nor the person upon the condition. Suppose the last, and person would become variable; suppose the first, and condition would be unalterable; then in each case, either the personality or the limitation ceases. We are, not because we think, will, feel; we think, will, feel, not because we are. We are, because we are; we feel, think and will, because there is something else besides ourselves.

Person, then, must be its own ground, since the permanent cannot result from the changeable; and thus we should have,

firstly, the idea of the absolute, self-founded Me, that is, freedom. Condition must have a ground; and since it depends not upon Person, consequently is not absolute, it must *result* (from something); and so we should have, secondly, the conditional state of all dependent Me, or becoming, that is, time. That time is the condition of all becoming, is an identical proposition, since it only affirms this, the result is the condition to some result.

Person, which discovers itself in the eternally permanent Me, and only in this, cannot become, cannot begin, in time, since on the contrary, time must commence in that, for what is permanent must be the ground of the changeable. Something must change, if there would be change; then this something cannot itself constitute the change. When we say, the rose blossoms and fades, we make the rose the permanent in this transformation, and bestow upon it a person, as it were, in which both the above conditions are apparent. That man first becomes, is no objection, since man is not only person generally, but person which finds itself in a definite condition. But every condition, every definite existence arises in time, and so then must man, as a phenomenon, have a beginning, although the pure intelligence within him is eternal. Without time, that is, without first *becoming*, he would never *be* a definite existence; his personality would exist, it is true, potentially, but not in the actual. The permanent Me becomes an appearance only in the results of its ideas.

Then the material of activity, or reality, which the highest Intelligence creates out of himself, man must first *receive*, and, indeed, he receives it by means of observation, as something sensible beyond him in space, and as something variable within him in time. His permanent Me accompanies this variable substance within him, and to remain essentially *himself* in every change, to turn all his observations into experience, that is into unity of knowledge, and to make each of his modes in time precedents for all time, is the prescription of his rational nature. He *exists*, only in a state of change or of permanence.

Man, presented in his perfection, would accordingly be the permanent unity, which remains eternally the same amid the waves of mutation.

Although an infinite being, a divinity, cannot *become*, yet that tendency must be called divine, which has for its infinite task, to develop the special tokens of divinity, absolute promulgation of capacity (reality of all that is possible), and absolute unity of manifestation (necessity of all that is real). Man indisputably bears a potential divinity in his personality; the path to divinity, if one can call that a path, which never finds its goal, is opened to him in the *senses*.

His personality, considered for itself alone, and independent of all sensible substance, is only the *disposition* for a possible, infinite development; and so long as he neither sees nor feels, he is nothing more than form and latent faculty. His sensuous impressibility, considered for itself alone and distinct from the self-activity of the spirit, prevails no farther than to place him, who without it is only form, in communication with matter, but by no means uniting him to matter. So long as he only feels, only desires and acts from mere desire, he is nothing more than world, if we include under this name only the formless contents of time. It is indeed his sensation alone, which converts his capacity into activity, but it is only his personality, which secures his efficiency to himself. Then in order not to be mere world, he must impart form to matter; in order not to be mere form, he must give actuality to his internal disposition. He realizes form when he creates time, and contrasts the changeable with the permanent, the manifoldness of the world with the eternal unity of his Me; he gives a form to matter, when again he abolishes time, maintains permanency in change, and subjects the manifoldness of the world to the unity of his Me.

Hence result two opposing demands in man, the two fundamental laws of sensuo-rational nature. The first insists upon absolute *reality*; it would convert all that is purely formal into world, and make all its dispositions apparent; the second

insists upon absolute *formality* ; it would resolve everything that is mere world into itself, and bring harmony into all its mutations ; in other words, it would alienate all within, and form all without. Both intentions, considered in their complete fulfilment, lead back to the conception of divinity, from which I started.

## TWELFTH LETTER.

WE are incited to the performance of this twofold task of bringing into reality the necessary in *ourselves*, and of subjecting the actual *out* of ourselves to the law of necessity, by two opposing powers, which we call very properly, impulses, since they impel us to realize their object. The first of these impulses, which I will call the *sensuous*, results from man's physical being or from his sensuous nature, and is occupied in establishing him within the bounds of time and introducing him to matter; not giving him matter, since for that a free activity of person is appointed, which matter acknowledges and distinguishes from the permanent itself. But matter means here nothing but annation or reality, which occupies time; consequently this impulse demands that there should be mutation, that time should have contents. This condition of time as merely occupied, is called perception, and through that alone the physical being announces itself.

Since everything which exists in time is *successive*, it follows that *something* is, all else excluded. When we catch the tone of an instrument, only that single one of all the tones it can possibly give, is actual; so when man perceives the present, the whole infinite extent of his possibility is restricted to that single mode of being. Then wherever this impulse works in exclusive directions, there the highest limitation necessarily exists; man in this condition is nothing but a simple quantity, an occupied moment of time—or rather he is

not, since so long as perception rules him and time carries him along, his personality is removed.\*

The dominion of this impulse stretches to the extent of man's finiteness, and since all form appears only in a material, and all that is absolute only through limited media, so in fact humanity depends upon the sensuous impulse at last for its whole manifestation. But, notwithstanding that alone rouses and unfolds the dispositions of humanity, yet it is that only, which makes its consummation impossible. It binds the high-soaring spirit to the world of sense with adamant chains, and calls abstraction from the freest roving into the infinite back to the restraints of the present. Thought, it is true, may for a moment elude it, and a vigorous will may triumphantly oppose its demands; but subjected nature soon recovers its privileges, to strive after a reality of existence, a substance to our various knowledge, and an aim for our activity.

The second of these impulses, which can be called the *form-impulse*, results from the absolute being of man or from his rational nature, and is engaged in placing him in freedom, introducing harmony in the diversity of his manifestation, and maintaining his person in every variation of condition. Now since the last, as an absolute and indivisible unity can never be in contradiction with itself, *since through all eternity we are*

\* For this condition of self-absence under the dominion of perception, language has the very striking expression — *to be beside one's self*, that is, to be out of his Me. Notwithstanding this form of speech can only be used where perception amounts to actual engrossment, and this condition is more perceptible from its duration, yet every one is beside himself, so long as he only perceives. To return from this condition to *presence of mind*, is properly called, *to come to himself*, that is to return to his Me, to re-establish his person. We do not say of one who lies in a swoon, he is beside himself, but *he is out of himself*, that is, he is deprived of his Me, the former not being in the latter. Hence one who recovers from a swoon is only *with himself*, which may still consist with his being beside himself.



*ourselves*, then this impulse, which insists upon maintaining the personality, can never demand any other thing, than it must demand through all eternity; then it decides for ever, as it decides for the present, and enjoins for the present, what it enjoins for ever. Consequently it embraces the whole results of time, that is to say—it abolishes time and change—it will have the actual, necessary and eternal, and the eternal and necessary, actual; in other words—its aim is Truth and Right.

As the first impulse only creates *cases*, the other gives *laws*; laws for every judgment concerning cognitions, laws for every will concerning actions. Suppose that we recognise an object, that we attribute an objective validity to a subjective condition, or that we act from cognitions, that we make the objective the determining ground of our condition—in either case we remove this condition from the jurisdiction of time, and concede to it a reality for all men and all time, that is, universality and necessity. Feeling can only say—that is true *for this subject and at this moment*, and another moment, another subject can come to disprove the assertion of the present perception. But when thought once declares—that is, it decides for ever and aye, and the validity of its declaration is warranted by the personality which defies all change. Inclination can only say—that is well *for your individuality and your present need*, but your individuality and present need is hurried along with the progress of change, which will make what you earnestly covet to-day, the object of your future aversion. But when the moral feeling says, *that shall be*, it decides for ever and aye; when you recognise truth, because it is truth, and practise justice because it is justice, you have converted a single case into a precedent for all cases, and have lived out one moment as eternity.

Thus to whatever extent the form-impulse carries its authority, and the pure object acts within us, there is the highest amplitude of being, there vanish all restraints, there has man elevated himself from a simple quantity, to which the needy

sense confined him, *to an ideal unity*, embracing the whole realm of phenomena. By this operation we are no more in time but time is in us, with its unending procession. We are individuals no more, but a race; our spirit has issued the decision for all spirits, our action represents the choice of all hearts.

## THIRTEENTH LETTER

AT first sight nothing appears to be more opposite than the tendencies of these two impulses, one aiming at change, the other at immutability. And yet both these instincts exhaust the conception of humanity, and a third *fundamental* impulse, reconciling both, is absolutely an un-supposable idea. Then how can we restore the unity of human nature, which appears to be completely destroyed by this primitive and radical antipathy?

It is true, their *tendencies* conflict, but, what is worthy of remark, not *in the same objects*, and things that never approach, can never interfere. The sensuous impulse demands change, it is true, but not that it should extend itself to person and its province; not that there should be mutation among principles. The form-impulse tends to unity and permanence, but it will not have the condition fixed as well as the person, it does not desire an identity of perception. Thus they are not opposed by nature, and if, nevertheless, they so appear, it first happens through a willing transgression of nature, while they misunderstand themselves, and wander from their spheres.\* It is the office of *culture*, to watch over this, and to secure each of these impulses within its proper limits, dispensing strict impartiality to both, and not only maintaining the rational impulse against the sensuous, but also the latter against the former. Thus its business is twofold; first, to preserve perception against the encroachments of freedom; second, to secure the personality

\* As soon as we maintain a primitive, and therefore necessary antagonism of both impulses, there is really no other method of

against the power of perceptions. It succeeds in the former by developing the feeling, in the latter by developing the reason.

Since world is extension in time and change, so the perfection of that faculty which unites man with the world, must be the greatest possible mutability and extensiveness. Since person is that which continues through change, so the greatest possible self-dependence and intensity must constitute the perfection of that faculty, which is in opposition to mutation.

preserving the unity in man, than by unconditionally *subordinating* the sensuous to the rational impulse. But the result will be no harmony, only uniformity, and man still remains for ever divided. Undoubtedly there must be subordination, but it must be mutual: since if the limited can never support the absolute, or freedom depend upon time, it is equally certain that the absolute by itself can never support the limited, that condition in time can never depend upon freedom. Then both principles are at once subordinate and coordinate, that is, they are in alternation; without form no matter, without matter no form. (This idea of reciprocity and its whole importance, is found excellently defined in Fichte's Basis of Collective Science, Leipsic, 1794.) We do not know, indeed, the mode of person in the realm of idea, but we certainly know that it cannot reveal itself in the realm of time, without having recourse to matter; then in this realm, matter will not only have something determinate *beneath* the form, but also *beside*, and independent of the form. It is just as necessary that the reason should not presume to determine anything in the province of feeling, as that feeling should decide nothing in the province of reason. As soon as we claim a province for each of these, we exclude the other from it, and place limits to them, which can only be transgressed to the injury of both.

In a transcendental philosophy, where everything depends upon freeing form from substance, and preserving what is necessary pure from all that is accidental, it is too often the custom, to consider material only as a hindrance, and to establish a necessary opposition between the reason and perception, since in *this* affair it may be an impediment. Such a representation, it is true, exists by no means in the *spirit* of the Kantian system, though it may be found in the letter.

The more multiform and restless the susceptibility, and the more surfaces it presents to the actual, so much the more world does man *apprehend*, so many more dispositions does he unfold in himself; the more power and depth of personality, and the more freedom of reason he gains, so much the more world does man *comprehend*, so much more form does he create out of himself. Thus his culture will consist in this; first, to provide the susceptible faculty with numerous points of contact with the world, and to stretch passivity on the part of feeling to its highest point; second, to secure to the permanent faculty the greatest possible independence of the susceptible, and to stretch activity on the part of the reason to its highest point. When both qualities unite, then man will join the utmost self-dependence and freedom with the greatest fulness of being, and, instead of being merged in the world, will rather attract to himself its whole infinity of modes, and subject them to the unity of his reason.

Man can *invert* this relation, and consequently fail of his destination in a twofold manner. He can bestow the intensity which the active power requires upon the passive, anticipate the subjective by the objective impulse, and make the susceptible faculty the determinative. He can confer the extensiveness which is due to the passive power, upon the active, anticipate the objective impulse by the subjective, and substitute the determinative for the susceptible faculty. In the first case he cannot be *himself*, nor in the second *anything else*; consequently in both cases *neither*, or a nullity.\*

\* The injurious influence of an overweening sensuousness upon our thoughts and actions, is evident to every one; but the pernicious effects of an overweening rationality upon our knowledge and conduct, although ever so important and of frequent occurrence, is not so evident. Permit me here, to allude to only two, from the great crowd of pertinent cases, which may illustrate the danger of reflection and volition anticipating intuition and perception.

One of the most prominent reasons why our physical sciences

Suppose the sensuous impulse becomes determinative, sense the lawgiver, and person subject to the world, it would cease to be objective in the same proportion as it becomes mere force. As soon as man is only a content of time, *he is* no longer, and consequently *has* no contents. His condition, too, is removed

advance so slowly, is evidently the universal and almost insurmountable propensity to teleological judgments (final causes), by which, as soon as they are elementally used, the susceptible is displaced by the determinative faculty. However emphatically and variously nature may effect our organs, all her manifoldness is lost upon us, because we seek nothing in her, but what we have placed in her, because we do not permit her to affect us *inwardly from without*, but rather strive *towards her from within*, with an impatient and froward reason. And should any one appear, who approaches her with clam, pure and open senses, and for that reason meets with a multitude of phenomena, which, in our system of anticipation we have overlooked, we are highly astonished that so many eyes should have noticed nothing in such a clear daylight. This eager struggle after harmony, before we have collected the single tones which should form it, this violent usurpation of reflection in a province, where all its authority must be conditional, is the cause of the sterility of so many thinking heads for the best of science; and it is hard to say, whether sensuousness which assumes no form, or reason which waits for no contents, has most impeded the extension of our knowledge.

It is just as hard to determine whether our practical philanthropy is more chilled and disturbed by the violence of our desires, or by the rigidity of our principles, more by the egoism of our senses, or by the egoism of our reason. To make ourselves sympathizing, benevolent, active men, feeling and character must be united, just as susceptibility of sense must coincide with energy of intellect, to give *us* experience. How can we be just, kind, and humane towards others, with ever so praiseworthy maxims of conduct, if we want the ability, truly and really to comprehend foreign natures, to appropriate foreign situations, and to make foreign feelings our own? But this ability will be repressed, as well in the education we receive as in that we give to ourselves, according as we seek to break the force of desires, and establish the character upon principles. As it is with difficulty that we remain firm to our principles amid the ardour of feelings, we prefer the more convenient

with his personality, since both are in reciprocity — since the mutable demands a permanent, and limited reality an infinite. Suppose the form-impulse becomes susceptible, that is, if reflection anticipates perception, and person substitutes itself for the world, it would cease to be subjective and a self-dependent power in proportion as it usurped the place of the objective, since the permanent demands the mutable, and absolute reality limits to its development. As soon as man is only form, he *has* no form; and with his condition his person is consequently removed. In a word, reality is without him, and he is susceptible only so far as he is self-dependent; and only so far as he is susceptible, is reality within him, is he a thinking power.

Thus both impulses require limitations, and, so far as they

medium of making the character more secure by blunting the feeling; for indeed it is infinitely easier to enjoy tranquility before a disarmed rival, than to govern an impetuous and active foe. In this operation, then, consists for the most part, that which we call *forming a man*; and truly in the best sense of the phrase, when it signifies a cultivation of the inner, and not merely of the outer man. A man so formed will, it is evident, be secured from being rude nature, and from appearing as such; but at the same time his principles will arm him against every perception of nature, and humanity *from without* will reach him just as little as humanity *from within*.

A very pernicious abuse is made of the ideal of perfection, by applying it with all its severity, in judging other men, and in cases where we should labour in their behalf. The former leads to fanaticism, the latter to coldness and austerity. In truth one would make his social obligations uncommonly light, by substituting in thought the *ideal man*, who probably can help himself, for the *actual man*, who demands our aid. Strictness to oneself, joined with tenderness towards others, forms the truly excellent character. But for the most part, the man who is mild towards others, will be so towards himself, and he who is severe towards himself will be the same towards others; a character which is tender towards itself and severe towards others, is of all the most contemptible.

are considered as energies, abatement; the one, that it may not intrude within the province of legislation, the other, that it may not intrude into the province of perception. This abatement of the sensuous instinct need by no means be the effect of physical inability and a dulness of the perceptions, which everywhere only deserves contempt; it must be an operation of freedom and activity of person, which tempers the sensuous by its moral intensity, and by controlling impressions, lessens its depth, in order to give it surface. The character must set bounds to the temperament, since the sense need to lose *only in spirit*. Nor need this abatement of the form-impulse be the effect of a spiritual inability and a feebleness of thought or volition, which would debase humanity. Fulness of perceptions must be its laudable source; sensuousness must triumphantly maintain its province, and resist the violence which spirit would fain inflict upon it by its encroaching activity. In a word, personality must keep the subjective impulse, susceptibility or nature the objective impulse, each within its proper limits.



## FOURTEENTH LETTER.

WE have now attained the idea of such a reciprocity between both impulses, where the action of the one at the same time confirms and confines the action of the other, and where each one reaches singly its highest development only according to the energy of the other.

It is true, this reciprocity of both impulses is but a task of the reason, which man can only fully accomplish in the consummation of his being. It is in the most peculiar sense of the word, *the idea of his humanity*, consequently something infinite, to which in the course of time he will continually approximate, but never attain. "He should not strive for form at the expense of his reality, nor for reality at the expense of form: he should rather seek the absolute by a definite existence, and a definite through an infinite existence. He ought to set himself over against a world, since he is person, and should be person, and since a world is his opposite. He ought to feel, since he has consciousness, and he should be conscious, since he feels." He can never learn that he is actually commensurate with this idea; therefore in the full signification of the word, a man, so long as he excludes either one of these two impulses, or only satisfies them alternately; for so long as he only feels, his person or his absolute existence remains to him a mystery, and so does his condition or his existence in time, so long as he only thinks. But should cases occur where he effected *at the same time*, this twofold experience, being at the same time conscious of his freedom and sensible of his being, at the same time regarding himself as matter and as spirit—he would have in these cases, and positively only in these, a complete

intuition of his humanity, and the object which provided him with this intuition would be to him as a symbol of his *perfected* destiny, consequently (since this can only be attained in infinite time) a *forth-setting* of the Infinite.

Suppose that cases of this kind could actually occur, they would awake in him a new impulse, which, from the fact that the other two operate in unison, would be opposed to either one of them, considered singly, and would properly amount to a new impulse. The sensuous impulse will have mutation, that time may have contents; the form-impulse will have time abolished, that there may be no mutation. Then that impulse, in which both act united (I may be allowed to call it *Play-impulse*, till I have justified the appellation), the play-impulse, will aim at abolishing time *in time* (or actual mode), and at reconciling Becoming with absolute existence, mutation with identity.

The sensuous impulse will *become* defined, it will receive its object; the form-impulse will itself define, it will produce its object. Then the play-impulse will endeavour so to receive, as itself would have produced, and so to produce, as sense labours to receive.

The sensuous impulse excludes from its subject all self-activity and freedom, the form-impulse excludes from its subject all dependence, all passivity. But exclusion of freedom is physical, exclusion of passivity is moral, necessity. Then both impulses compel the mind, the former by the laws of nature, the latter by the laws of reason. The play-impulse, then, as that in which both act united, will at the same time morally and physically compel the mind; as it abolishes all accident, it will also abolish compulsion, and place man, both morally and physically, in freedom. When we embrace with passion any one, who deserves our contempt, we feel painfully the *compulsion of nature*. When we are hostilely disposed towards another, who extorts our esteem, we feel painfully the *compulsion of reason*. But as soon as our inclination coincides with our esteem, both the constraint of nature and of reason vanish,

and we begin to love him—that is, at the same time to play with our inclination and our esteem.

While farther the sensuous impulse compels us physically, and the form-impulse morally, so the former leaves our formal, the latter our material disposition contingent; that is, it is contingent, whether our happiness shall agree with our perfection, or the latter with the former. Then the play-impulse, in which both act united, will at the same time make our formal and our material disposition, our perfection and our happiness, contingent; then since it makes *both* contingent, and since contingency also vanishes with necessity, it will again abolish the contingency in both, consequently bringing form into matter, and reality into form. In the same degree that it deprives the feelings and affections of their dynamical influence, it will harmonize them with the ideas of reason; and in the same degree that it deprives the laws of reason of their moral compulsion, it will reconcile them with the interest of sense.

## FIFTEENTH LETTER.

I APPROACH still nearer the goal, towards which I lead you by a path that has little to interest. Should you feel inclined to follow me a few steps further, a much wider field of view will open itself, and a pleasanter prospect will perhaps reward the toil of the journey.

The object of the sensuous impulse, expressed in a general idea, is called *life*, in its widest signification; an idea implying all material existence, and all that is immediately present to the sense. The object of the form-impulse, expressed generally, is called *shape*, as well in a free as literal signification; an idea which includes all formal qualities of things, and all their relations to reflection. The object of the play-impulse, expressed in a general proposition, can then be called *living shape*, an idea which serves to indicate all æsthetic qualities of phenomena, and in a word, what in its widest signification we call *Beauty*.

According to this explanation, if it should be one, Beauty will neither be extended over the whole province of life, nor only confined to that province. A block of marble, although it is inert and lifeless, can no less on that account become a living shape beneath the architect and sculpture; a man, although he lives and has shape, is therefore for a long while no living shape. That requires that his shape should be life, and his life, shape. So long as we only think of his shape, it is lifeless, mere abstraction; so long as we only perceive his life, it is shapeless, mere impression. He is a living shape, only when his form lives in our perception, and his life shapes itself in our understanding, and this will always be the case, where we decide that he is beautiful.

But because we know how to declare the elements which produce Beauty by their union, their genesis is by no means yet explained; for it would be requisite to that end, that we should comprehend *that union* itself, which, as is generally the case with all alternations between the finite and infinite, remains inscrutable. The reason makes the demand on transcendental grounds; there ought to be a partnership between the objective and subjective impulses, that is, a play-impulse; since only the unity of reality with form, of accident with necessity, of passivity with freedom, fulfils the conception of humanity. The reason must make this demand, since, according to its nature, it strives for perfection and for the removal of all limits, but human nature leaves *unsatisfied* every exclusive activity of either impulse, and settles a limit in itself. Accordingly, so soon as the reason pronounces the decision, there shall exist a humanity—it has thereby established the law—there shall be Beauty. Experience can declare to us if Beauty exists, and we shall know it, as soon as we are taught whether a humanity exists. But neither reason nor experience can teach us *how* Beauty can exist, or *how* a humanity is possible.

Man, we know, is neither exclusively matter, nor exclusively spirit. Beauty, then, as consummation of his humanity, can neither be exclusively mere life, as has been maintained by ingenious observers, who adhered too scrupulously to the testimony of experience—a conclusion to which the taste of the age would fain compel them; nor can it be exclusively mere shape, as has been decided by speculative philosophers, who removed themselves too far from experience, and by philosophizing artists, who in their interpretation of it were too much influenced by the requirement of art;\* it is the common

\* Burke, in his philosophical inquiries into the origin of our ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful, makes beauty to consist in mere life. Every adherent of a dogmatic system, who has ever

object of both impulses, that is, of the play-impulse. This name is fully justified by the use of language, which is wont to signify by the word play (*Spiel*), all that is contingent either subjectively or objectively, and yet neither externally nor internally constrained. As the mind, through intuition of the beautiful, finds itself in a happy medium between law and need, so for the reason that it shares itself between both, is the constraint of both removed. In its demands upon the subjective, as upon the objective impulse, it is *serious*, since the one, by perception, is related to reality, the other to the necessity of things: since the first is directed, through action, to the maintenance of life, the second to the support of dignity—thus both of them to truth and perfection. But according as dignity blends with life, the latter becomes more indifferent, and duty compels no longer when inclination attracts; in like manner the mind receives the reality of things, the material truth, calmly and freely, as soon as the latter finds the formal truth, the law of necessity; and it feels itself no longer overtaken by abstraction, as soon as it can accompany direct intuition. In a word, when the actual comes into communication with ideas, it loses its seriousness, since it becomes little; and when the necessary coincides with perception, it also puts away the same, since it becomes light (*leicht*).

But you may have been tempted long ago to make the objection, whether Beauty is not debased, by making it consist in mere play, and whether those frivolous objects which hitherto have been in possession of this word, are not equally exalted? Does it not contradict the rational conception and the dignity of Beauty, if, while it is considered as an instru-

made known his belief on this subject, makes it to consist, as far as I know, in mere shape; and, among other artists, Raphael Mengs, in his *Thoughts on Taste in Painting*. Thus the *critical* philosophy has opened the way in this department, as well as in every other, to the conduct of empiricism back to principles, and speculation to experience.

ment of culture, it is restricted to a mere play?—and does it not contradict our experimental ideas of play, which may exist with the exclusion of all taste, to confine it merely to Beauty?

“ But what is the meaning of pure play, since we know that in every condition of man it is play, and only play, that makes him complete, and unfolds at once his twofold nature? What you call *restriction*, according to your idea of the case, I call *extension*, according to mine, which I have established by proof. Then I would rather say exactly the reverse—man is only *serious* with the agreeable, the good, the perfect; but with Beauty he plays. Certainly we need not here call to mind the sports which are in vogue in actual life, and which commonly are directed only to very material objects; but in vain, too, should we seek in actual life for the Beauty, which is our present theme. Actually existing Beauty is worthy of an actually existing play-impulse; but through the *ideal* of Beauty, which the reason exhibits, an ideal of the play-impulse is also manifested, which man should have before his eyes in all his sports.

We should never<sup>\*</sup> err, if we sought a man's ideal of Beauty in the same direction in which he satisfies his play-impulse. If the Greeks were amused by the bloodless strife of strength, fleetness, agility, and the nobler contest of talent, at the Olympic games, and if the Romans enjoyed the death-struggle of a conquered gladiator or of his Lybian rival, we can comprehend, from this single trait, why we must seek the ideal shapes of a Venus, a Juno, an Apollo, not in Rome, but in Greece.\* But now the reason speaks; the Fair shall not be

\* To confine ourselves to modern times, let us compare together the races in London, the bull fights in Madrid, the former spectacles in Paris, the gondola contests at Venice, the baiting matches at Vienna, and the gay, attractive life of the Corso at Rome, and it will not be difficult to portray the different shades of taste of these various nations. In the mean time, far less uniformity is manifest

mere life and mere shape, but living shape, that is, Beauty; at the same time, it dictates to man the twofold law of absolute formality and absolute reality. Consequently it decides, that man shall only *play* with Beauty, and shall play *only with Beauty*.

Then to sum up all briefly, man only plays, when, in the full signification of the word, he *is* a man, and he *is only entirely a man when he plays*. This principle, which at this moment perhaps appears paradoxical, will contain a great and deep meaning, when we have advanced so far as to apply it to the twofold seriousness of duty and destiny; it will uphold, I assure you, the whole fabric of æsthetic art, and of the yet difficult art of life. But this principle is only startling in science; it long ago lived and acted in the art and the feeling of the Greeks, as their most distinguished master; but they transplanted to Olympus what should have flourished upon earth. Guided by truth itself, they caused both the seriousness and the toil, which furrow the cheeks of mortals, and the vain pleasure which smoothes the vacant countenance, to disappear from the forehead of the celestials—they freed the ever-happy from the fetters of all motive, all duty, all care—and made *indolence* and *indifference* the enviable lot of divinity, a merely human name for the freest and noblest existence. In their higher conception of necessity, which embraced both worlds, both the material constraint of natural, as well as the spiritual constraint of moral—laws, was merged; and true freedom was first educed from the unity of both these necessities. Animated by this spirit, they erased from the lineaments of their ideal all traces of *will*, together with *inclination*, or rather they made both unrecognisable, since they knew how to ally both in the closest union. It is neither grace, nor is it

in the common sports of these different countries, than among the sports of the more polished classes in the same countries, for which we can easily account.



dignity, that speaks to us from the noble countenance of a Juno Ludovisi; it is neither, because it is at the same time, both. While the feminine deity solicits our adoration, the godlike woman inflames our love; but while we wholly resign ourselves to the heavenly graciousness, the heavenly self-sufficiency repels us. The whole shape rests and dwells within itself, a perfected creation—as if it were beyond all space, self-sustained, uncontradicted; there is no power, struggling with adverse powers—no weak side, where finiteness could make invasion. Irresistibly seized and attracted by the graciousness, and repelled by the self-sufficiency, we find ourselves at the same time in a condition of the highest peace and the highest emotion; and there results that wonderful feeling, for which the intellect has no conception, and language no name.

## SIXTEENTH LETTER.

WE have seen Beauty resulting from the reciprocity of two opposite impulses, and from the union of two opposite principles; then we must seek its highest ideal in the most perfect possible alliance and *equipoise* of reality and form. But this only exists as an idea, which can never be fully realized in the actual, where a preponderance of one element over the other will always remain; and the utmost to be gained in experience will consist in an *oscillation* between two principles, now reality being superior, and now form. Then Beauty in the ideal is always only indivisible and single, since it can give only a single equipoise: on the contrary, Beauty in actual life will always be twofold, since the equipoise can be overcome in a twofold manner, by oscillation to this side and to that.

I observed in one of the foregoing letters, and it follows necessarily from the connexion of the preceding one, that we should expect from Beauty at the same time a relaxing and an intensive action; the former, in order to preserve both the subjective and the objective impulses in their limits—the latter, in order to maintain both in their power. But both these modes of action of Beauty should, according to the idea, be actually only a single one. It should relax, for the reason that it braces equally both natures—and it should brace, since it equally relaxes both natures. This already follows from the idea of a reciprocity, by whose means both parts, at the same time, necessarily qualify and are qualified by each other, and whose purest product is Beauty. But experience affords us no example of such a perfect reciprocity; for here, more or less, the overpoise will always create a deficiency, and the defi-

ciency an overpoise. So that whatever in the ideal of Beauty, only as represented, is *becoming* different, exists as an actual difference in the Beauty of experience. The ideal Beauty, although indivisible and single, manifests in a different relation both a reductive and energetical quality; in experience it *gives* a reductive and energetical Beauty. So it is, and so it will be, in all the cases where the absolute is transferred to the limits of time, and ideas of the reason are to become realized in humanity. Thus the reflecting man imagines *virtue*, truth, felicity; but the acting man will practise only *virtues*, comprehend only *truths*, enjoy only *happy days*. To lead the latter back into the former—to substitute morality for morals, felicity for prosperity, knowledge for information, is the business of physical and moral culture; out of beauties to educe Beauty, is the problem of æsthetic culture.

As little can energetical Beauty preserve man from a certain residue of rudeness and austerity, as the reductive protects him from a certain degree of effeminacy and euervation. As the tendency of the first is to strengthen the disposition, both physically and morally, and increase its elasticity, it too easily happens, that the obstacles of temperament and character diminish the sensibility for impressions, that the finer humanity meets with a subjection that should befall rude nature alone, and that rude nature receives an accession of power, that only ought to avail the free Person; hence we find in the periods of power and fulness, true greatness of representation joined with the gigagantesque and fantastical, and elevation of sentiment with the most fearful outbursts of passion; hence, too, we find nature, in the periods of principle and form, as often oppressed as ruled, as often outraged as surpassed. And as the tendency of the reductive Beauty is, to relax the disposition both morally and physically, it happens as easily, that energy of feeling is stifled with violence of desire, and that the character shares a loss of power which should befall only the passions; hence we observe in the so-called refined periods, that softness frequently degenerates into effeminacy, pliancy into shallowness, cor-

rectness into emptiness, liberality into caprice, lightness into frivolity, calmness into apathy; the most despicable caricature trenching close upon the noblest humanity. Then reductive Beauty is essential for man, under the constraint either of matter or of form; since he is long affected by greatness and power, before he begins to appreciate harmony and grace. Energetical Beauty is essential for man, in the indulgence of taste; since in a state of refinement he is too prone to neglect a power which he brought off from a state of rudeness.

And now I believe that that contradiction is explained and answered, which we are accustomed to meet with in the opinions of men concerning the influence of Beauty, and in their estimation of æsthetic culture. This contradiction is explained, when we remember that Beauty is twofold in experience, and that both parties predicate concerning the whole genus, what each can only prove concerning a particular kind. And this contradiction is removed, when we distinguish the twofold exigency of humanity, to which that twofold Beauty corresponds. Then both parties will probably be in the right, if they only first settle with each other what kind of beauty and what form of humanity they have in their thoughts.

In the progress of my inquiries, I shall pursue the same path that nature, in an æsthetic respect, takes with men, and shall rise from the species of Beauty to the idea of the genus itself. I shall examine the effects of reductive Beauty upon intended man (*intentus—angespannten*), and of energetical Beauty upon the opposite, in order, finally, to dissolve both opposing modes of Beauty into the unity of the ideal Beauty, just as the two opposite forms of humanity disappear in the unity of the ideal man.

## SEVENTEENTH LETTER.

So long as we only deduced generally the universal idea of Beauty from the conception of human nature, we needed to impute no other limits to the latter, than are directly established in its constitution, and are inseparable from the idea of finiteness. Unconcerned about the accidental restrictions which it might sustain in actual development, we drew our conception of it directly from the reason, as the source of all necessity; and the ideal of Beauty was simultaneous with the ideal of Humanity.

But we now descend from the realm of ideas to the arena of reality, in order to discover man *in a definite condition*, consequently under limitations, which result not originally from his abstract conception, but from external circumstances, and a contingent use of his freedom. But however manifoldly the idea of humanity may be restricted in him, its simple contents already teach us, that in its totality only *two* opposite deviations from itself can occur. Should his perfection consist in the accordant energy of his sensuous and spiritual powers, he can only fail of this perfection either by a want of harmony or of energy. Thus, before we have examined the testimony of experience, we are beforehand certain, through the pure reason, that we shall find the actual, consequently the limited man, either in a condition of intensity or of relaxation, according as either the partial activity of single powers destroys the harmony of his being, or the unity of nature establishes itself upon the equable relaxation of his sensuous and spiritual power.. Both opposite limits, as now ought to be proved, are removed by Beauty, which restores harmony to the intended

man, and energy to the relaxed man ; and in this manner, according to its nature, leads the restricted back to an absolute condition, and creates man as a perfect whole within himself.

Then it by no means falsifies in Beauty the conception which we entertained of it in Speculation; only that we find it far less applicable here, than there, where we needed to apply it to the pure conception of humanity. In man, as presented by experience, Beauty finds an already depraved and perverse matter, which robs it of its *ideal* perfection, in proportion as he blends with that his *individual* disposition. Hence everywhere in reality it will appear only as a particular and limited species, never as pure genus ; in intended minds it will part with its freedom and manifoldness, in relaxed minds, with its active power ; but this contradictory appearance will never mislead us, who are by this time familiar with its true character. Far from defining its conception with the crowd of critics, from isolated phenomena, and making *itself* responsible for the deficiency, which man displays, under its influence, we know rather, that it is man who transfers to Beauty the incompleteness of his individuality, who by his subjective limitation perpetually opposes its consummation, and reduces its absolute ideal to two restricted modes of development.

It was affirmed, that the reductive Beauty is requisite for an intended mind, and the energetical for a relaxed mind. But I call man intended, as well when he is found under the constraint of perceptions, as when under the constraint of ideas. Every *exclusive domination* of one of his two ground impulses, is a condition of force and constraint for him ; and freedom only consists in the co-operation of both his natures. The man who is unduly ruled by feelings, or the sensuously intended man, is then relaxed and placed in freedom by form ; he who is unduly ruled by laws, or the spiritually intended man, is relaxed and placed in freedom by matter. Then, in order to satisfy this twofold problem, the reductive Beauty will manifest itself in two distinct shapes. First, as peaceful

form, it will mollify savage life, and lead the way from perception to thoughts; second, as living image, it will endow abstract form with sensible power—lead back conception to intuition, and law to feeling. It performs the first service for the child of nature, the second for the child of art. But since in both cases it does not possess perfect control over its material, but depends upon that which either formless nature, or contranatural art affords, it will bear in both cases marks of its origin, and lose itself on the one hand more in material life, on the other, more in pure abstract form.

To be able to form a conception in what manner Beauty may become a means to abolish that twofold intensiveness, we must discover its origin in the human mind. Resolve, then, for a short sojourn in the realm of speculation, before leaving it entirely, to sally forth more confidently into the field of experience.

## EIGHTEENTH LETTER.

THE sensuous man is led by Beauty to form and reflection; the spiritual man is re-conducted by Beauty to matter, and the world of sense is restored.

It appears to result from this, that there must be a *mean condition* between matter and form—between passion and action, and that Beauty places us in this condition. The majority of mankind form this idea of Beauty, as soon as they begin to reflect upon its operations, and refer to it all experiences. But on the other hand, nothing is more absurd and contradictory than such an idea, since the distance between matter and form, passion and action, is *infinite*, and can positively be mediated by nothing. How do we remove this contradiction? Beauty combines the two opposite conditions of perception and reflection, and yet really affords no mean between the two. The former is made certain by experience, the latter directly by reason.

This is the particular point, whither finally the whole question of Beauty tends; and should we succeed in solving this problem satisfactorily, we shall have found at the same time the clue to the whole labyrinth of æsthetics.

But we meet here with two very different operations, which must necessarily support each other in this inquiry. Beauty, in the first place, combines two conditions, which are *diametrically opposite*, and can never become one. We must proceed upon this opposition; we must comprehend and recognise it in its whole clearness and force, so that both conditions may be precisely defined—else we confound, but do not unite. Secondly, Beauty *combines* these two discordant conditions, and



thus removes the disagreement. But while both conditions remain in lasting opposition, they are only to be combined by being abolished. Then our second business is, to make this union perfect, to carry it through so clearly and completely, that both conditions will entirely vanish in a third, leaving in the whole no trace of the division—else we dismember, but do not unite. All the disputes which ever reigned in the philosophical world, upon the conception of Beauty, and which reign in part at the present day, have only this origin, that the inquiries commenced either not with a rigorous discrimination, or resulted in a combination not sufficiently perfect. Those philosophers who blindly trust the guidance of their feeling in a consideration of this subject, can attain to no *conception* of Beauty, since they distinguish no single whole in the sum total of sensible impressions. The others who follow intellect exclusively, can never attain a conception of *Beauty*, since they perceive in the same total nothing but parts, and spirit and matter in their most perfect unity remain to them for ever distinct. The first fear to abolish *dynamical* Beauty, that is, as an active power, if they should separate what is associate in feeling; the others fear to abolish *logical* Beauty, that is, as a conception, if they should combine what is distinct in intellect. The former will imagine Beauty as it acts; the latter will leave it to act, as it is imagined. Then both must miss the truth—the former, since they imitate infinite nature with their circumscribed reflective faculty; the latter, since they would restrict infinite nature according to their laws of thought. The first fear to deprive Beauty of its freedom, by a too severe dismemberment; the others fear to destroy the definiteness of its conception by a too rash combination. But the former do not consider, that the freedom in which they justly place the existence of Beauty, is not anarchy, but harmony of laws—not caprice, but the deepest necessity; the latter do not reflect, that the definiteness which they demand from Beauty with equal justice, does not consist in the *exclusion* of certain realities, but in the *absolute inclusion* of all—

that it is not restriction, then, but infinity. We shall avoid the rocks, on which both are shipwrecked, if we start from the two elements, in which Beauty divides itself for the intellect, then elevating ourselves to the pure æsthetic unity, through which it manifests itself to the perception, and in which both those conditions entirely vanish.\*

\* The above parallel will have afforded an inference to the attentive reader, that the *sensuous* æstheticians, who allow more force to the testimony of experience than to reasoning, separate themselves far less from the truth according to *fact*, than their opponents, although they cannot compare with the latter in *insight*; and we find the same relation everywhere between nature and science. Nature (sense) everywhere combines, the intellect separates; but the reason combines again; hence man, before he begins to philosophise, is nearer the truth than the philosopher, who has not yet concluded his research. We can for this reason, without further examination, be convinced of the error of a system, as soon as it contradicts common observation, *in its result*; but with equal justice we may suspect it, when form and method, according to common observation, are in its favour. Those authors may console themselves with the latter, who cannot deliver a philosophical deduction, as many readers seem to expect, like a fireside conversation. With the former one may silence those who would found new systems at the expense of the human understanding.

## NINETEENTH LETTER.

WE discern in man, generally, two distinct conditions of passive and active determinableness, and as many conditions of passive and active determinateness. The exposition of this principle leads us soonest to the goal.

The condition of the human spirit *before* all determinateness, which is given to it by outward impressions, is an unlimited determinableness. The Infinite of space and time is granted for the free use of his imagination, and since, according to supposition, nothing is placed in this wide realm of the Possible, consequently nothing excluded, we can call this condition of indeterminateness, a *void infinity*, which is by no means to be confounded with an infinite void.

Now suppose his sense is affected, and a single actuality obtains out of the infinite crowd of possible determinations. Something manifests itself. What was nothing but a mere possibility in the previous condition of simple determinableness, has now become an active power—acquires a content; but at the same time, it maintains, as active power, a limit, as when mere possibility, it was unlimited. Then Reality is there, but infinity is lost. In order to delineate a shape in space, we must *confine* endless space; in order to exhibit a special phase in time, we must *divide* the entirety of time. Then we attain to a reality only by limits, to *position* or actual establishment only by *negation* or exclusion, to determinateness only by the abolition of our free determinableness.

But no reality will exist in eternity from a mere exclusion, or no manifestation from pure sensuous perception, if something were not already extant, *by which* to exclude—if the positive were not deduced from negation, entity from nullity, by an absolute action of spirit: this action of mind is called reflecting or thinking, and its result is *The Light*.

There is no space for us, before we define a situation in space, but we should never define a situation without absolute Space—and the same with time. There is no time for us, before we have the present moment, but without eternity we should never have a manifestation of the moment. Then we really attain to the whole only through the part, to the unlimited only through the limited; but also, we only attain to the part through the whole, only to the limited through the unlimited.

When then it is asserted concerning the Beautiful, that it affords man a passage from perception to reflection, it is by no means to be understood, as if the Beautiful could fill up the gulf which separates perception from reflection, passion from action; this gulf is infinite, and nothing universal can result from the single in eternity, nothing necessary from the fortuitous, without the mediation of a new and independent faculty. Thought is the immediate action of this absolute faculty, which, it is true, must be induced by the senses to develop itself, but in its development depends so little upon them, that it rather announces itself only through its opposition to them. The independence with which it acts, excludes every foreign interference; and Beauty can become a means, to lead man from matter to form, from perceptions to principles, from a limited to an absolute being, not in so far as it *helps* in thinking (which contains an evident contradiction), but only in so far as it procures freedom for the reflective faculties to develop according to their own laws.

But this supposes, that the freedom of the reflective powers can be restricted, which seems to conflict with the idea of its independent ability. An ability, namely, which receives nothing from without as the material of its activity, can only be restrained by withdrawal of material, thus only negatively; and it argues misconception of the nature of a spirit, if we attribute a force to the sensuous passion, which could oppress positively the freedom of the mind. It is true, experience affords numerous examples, where the intellectual powers seem

subdued in proportion to the impetuous action of the sensuous powers; but instead of deducing this weakness of spirit from the strength of passion, we should rather explain this overweening strength of passion by that weakness of spirit; since the senses can no otherwise display a force against man, than so far as spirit has freely ceased to maintain itself as such.

But while by this explanation I seek to meet a difficulty, I have apparently involved myself in another, and have saved the independence of the mind only at the cost of its unity. For how can the mind obtain *out of itself* at the same time principles of activity and of inactivity, without dividing and opposing itself?

Here we must remember, that we have before us the finite, not the infinite spirit. The finite spirit is that which *only* becomes active through passivity, which only attains the absolute through the limited, only acts and creates so far as it receives material. Then such a spirit will combine an impulse for the actual or limited, with an impulse for form or the absolute, as being the condition, without which it can neither possess nor satisfy the latter impulse. How far two such opposite tendencies can exist together in the same being, is a problem which may indeed puzzle the metaphysician, but not the transcendental philosopher. The latter by no means pretends to explain the possibility of things, but is content with establishing the knowledge by which the possibility of actual life is apprehended. And since life would be just as little possible without that mental contrariety as without absolute mental unity, so he sets forth both ideas with perfect authority, as equally necessary conditions of actual life, without troubling himself further with their compatibility. Finally, this indwelling of two primary impulses in no way contradicts the absolute unity of spirit, if one only distinguishes *himself* from both impulses. It is true, they both exist and act *in him*, but he himself is neither matter nor form, neither perception nor reason—a fact which those never appear to have considered, who only allow the human spirit to act, where its

procedure agrees with reason, and declare him to be purely passive where that contradicts reason.

Each of these primary impulses, as soon as it is unfolded, strives, according to its nature and necessarily, towards satisfaction, but for the reason that both necessarily strive, and yet both for opposite objects, this twofold constraint mutually cancels itself, and between both the Will maintains a perfect freedom. Then it is the Will which maintains itself against both impulses as a *force* (as ground of the actual), but neither of the two can act for itself as a force against the other. The violent man is not withheld from injustice by the positive inclination to justice, in which he is by no means deficient, and the excitable man is not led to violate his principles by the most lively incentive to pleasure. There is in man no other force than his Will, and that only which abolishes man—namely, death and each deprivation of consciousness—can take away his inmost freedom.

A necessity *without us* defines our condition, our existence in time, by means of sensuous perception. This is entirely involuntary, and so we must be passive beneath its operation. In like manner a necessity *within us* reveals our personality, by the instigation of that sensuous perception and by opposition to the same; for the consciousness cannot depend upon the Will, which it supposes. This primitive announcement of personality is not our merit, and its want is not our fault. Reason, that is, absolute consequence and universality of consciousness, is only demanded of him who is self-conscious; previously he is not a man, and no act of humanity can be expected from him. The metaphysician can declare the restrictions which the free and independent spirit suffers from perception, as little as the natural philosopher can apprehend the infinity which discovers itself on occasion of this restriction in personality. Neither abstraction nor experience conduct us back to the source from which our ideas of universality and necessity flow; their early appearance in time removes it from the observer, and their transcendent origin from the meta-

physical inquirer. But enough, that self-consciousness exists, and that contemporaneous with its unchangeable unity is exhibited the law of unity for all, that is *for* man, and for all, that should become *through him*, for his cognition and action. Unavoidably, unvitally, inconceivably do the ideas of truth and right appear already in the period of sensuousness, and we perceive the eternal in time, and the necessary in the series of chance, without being able to say whence and how it arose. Thus feeling and consciousness appear, entirely without the assistance of the subject, and the origin of both lies as much beyond our will, as it lies beyond the sphere of our knowledge.

But if both are actual, and if man, by means of perception, has made experience of a definite existence, and by self-consciousness experience of his absolute existence, so will both his primary impulses be quickened together with their objects. The sensuous impulse awakes with the experience of life (with the commencement of the individual), the rational with the experience of principle (with the commencement of personality), and now first, when both have come into existence, is his humanity constructed. Till this has taken place, everything within him results from the law of necessity; but now the hand of nature abandons him, and it is his concern to maintain the humanity which she founded and revealed within him. That is, as soon as two opposing impulses in him are active, both lose their necessitation, and the opposition of two necessities gives birth to *Freedom*.\*

\* I would remark, in order to prevent all misconception, that so often as mention is here made of freedom, that is not meant which necessarily appertains to man, considered as an intelligence, and which can neither be given to nor taken from him; but that which is based upon his compound nature. When man for the most part only acts rationally, he demonstrates thereby a freedom of the first kind; when he acts rationally within the restrictions of matter, and materially under the laws of reason, he demonstrates thereby a freedom of the second kind. One might simply explain the latter by a natural possibility of the former.

## TWENTIETH LETTER.

THAT freedom cannot be subject to influence, results already from its simple idea; but that *freedom itself* is not a work of man, but an operation of nature (this word taken in its widest signification), and that, then, it can be accelerated and retarded by natural causes, follows with like necessity from the preceding. It first commences when man is *complete*, and *both* his primary impulses have unfolded; then it must be wanting, so long as he is incomplete, and one of his impulses is excluded, and it can be restored by all that secures to him his completeness.

Now suppose really a moment to occur, as well in the whole genus as in a single man, in which man is incomplete and one of his instincts excluded. We know that he commences with mere life, in order to end with form; that he is an individual sooner than Person, that he proceeds from the limited to the infinite. The sensuous impulse then comes into action sooner than the rational, since perception precedes consciousness, and in this *priority* of the sensuous impulse we find the explication to the whole history of human freedom.

Suppose then a moment when the sensuous impulse acts as nature and as necessity, since the form-impulse is not yet in active opposition; when sensuousness is a force, since the man has not yet begun—then in the man himself there can be no other force but the Will. But in the reflective condition, or the contrary, to which man should now pass, the reason should



be a force, and the place of the physical should be usurped by a logical and moral necessity. Then that perceptive force must be annihilated, before its law can be removed. Thus it does not follow, that something commences, which not yet *was*—but something which *was*, must previously cease. Man cannot pass immediately from perception to reflection; he must *retrace one step*, since only when one determination is removed, can the opposite succeed. Then in order to exchange passivity for self-activity, a passive for an active determination, he must instantly be *free from all determinations*, and pass through a condition of mere determinableness. Consequently in a certain sense he must return to that negative condition of mere undeterminateness, in which he was found, before he had received a sensuous impression. But this condition was utterly void of contents, and it is now requisite to combine an equal undeterminateness, and an equal unlimited determinableness with the greatest possible capacity (*Gehalt*), since something positive ought directly to result from such a condition. The determination which he may receive through sensation must then be retained, since he ought not to lose reality; but at the same time it must be abolished so far as it is a restriction, that an unlimited determinableness may ensue. Thus the problem is, at the same time, to annihilate and preserve the determination of condition, which is only possible by *setting another in opposition*. The scales of a balance stand poised, when they are empty; but they also stand poised, when they contain equal weights.

Thus the mind passes from perception to reflection by an intermediate inclination (*Stimmung*), in which sensuousness and reason are active at *the same time*, but for this reason mutually destroy their determining power, and effect a negation through an opposition. This intermediate inclination, in which the mind is neither physically nor morally constrained, and yet is active in both ways, pre-eminently deserves to be called a free inclination; and if we call the condition of sensuous determination the physical, but that of reflective

determination the logical and moral condition, we must call this condition of real and active determinableness, the æsthetic\* condition.

\* The following may serve as explanation for the reader, who imperfectly comprehends the pure signification of this word, so much abused through ignorance. *All* things which can ever be objects of perception, may be considered under four different relations. A fact can relate directly to our sensuous condition (our existence and well-being), that is its *physical* quality. Or it can relate to the understanding, and furnish us with a cognition; that is its *logical* quality. Or it can relate to our will, and be considered as an object of choice for a rational being; that is its *moral* quality. Or finally, it can relate to the entirety of our different powers, without being a definite object for any single one of them; that is its *æsthetic* quality. A man can recommend himself to us by his obligingness; we may regard him through the medium of his conversation; he may inspire us with respect by his character, but finally, independent of all this, and without ever having regard in our judgment either to any law or any design, he may please us, in pure contemplation, through his empirical expression. We criticise him æsthetically in the latter quality. So there is a culture for health, a culture for understanding, a culture for morality, a culture for taste and for beauty. The latter has for it design, to bring out the totality of our sensuous and spiritual powers in the greatest possible harmony. Meanwhile, since we are disposed to combat the idea of arbitrariness in the idea of the æsthetic, misled by a false taste, and still more confirmed in this error by false reasoning, I here remark, in addition (although these letters upon æsthetic culture are concerned with almost nothing else than the confutation of this error), that the mind in æsthetic conditions acts indeed freely, and in the highest degree free from all compulsion, but in nowise free from laws, and that this æsthetic freedom differs from logical necessity in reflection, and from moral necessity in volition, only in this point, that the laws which guide the operation of the mind, *do not become manifested*, and, since they meet with no opposition, they do not have the appearance of compulsion.

## TWENTY-FIRST LETTER.

THERE is, as I remarked in the beginning of the previous letter, a twofold condition of determinableness and a twofold condition of determinateness. I can now substantiate this principle.

The mind is determinable only so far as generally it is not determined; but it is also determinable so far as it is not exclusively determined, that is, not limited by its determination. The former is mere indeterminateness (it is without limits, because it is without reality); the latter is the æsthetic determinableness (it has no limits, since it combines all reality.)

The mind is determined so far, generally, as it only is limited; but it is also determined so far as it limits itself by a single absolute faculty. It finds itself in the first case, if it perceives—in the second, if it reflects. Then what reflection is with reference to determination, the æsthetic condition is with reference to determinableness; the former is restriction from an internal, infinite power, the latter is negation from an internal, infinite fulness. Just as perception and reflection come in contact at the only point, where the mind in both conditions is determined, and man is exclusively something—either individual or Person, but otherwise are infinitely separated from each other; in like manner does the æsthetic determinableness coincide with mere indeterminateness in the only point, where both exclude that definite existence, while in all other points they are distinct as nullity and totality, consequently infinitely distinct. Then if the latter, indeterminateness from deficiency, is conceived of as a *void infinity*, the æsthetic *freedom of determinateness*, which is its real counter-

part, must be considered as an *occupied infinity*; a representation which coincides strictly with that instilled by the previous inquiries.

Man, then, in the æsthetic condition is *null*, so far as he regards a single result, and not the whole ability, and has in view the deficiency in himself of each particular determination. Hence we must allow the perfect propriety of those, who declare Beauty and the inclination which it imparts to the mind, when considered with reference to *knowledge* and *disposition*, to be utterly negative and fruitless. Their views are perfectly just, since Beauty actually affords no single result, either for the intellect or for the will; it carries out no single design, either intellectual or moral; it discovers no single truth—helps us to perform no single duty, and is, in a word, equally incapable of establishing the character or enlightening the head. Then so far as a man's personal worth or dignity only depends upon himself, æsthetic culture leaves it entirely indeterminate, and nothing farther is gained, than to make it possible for him, on the side of nature, to make out of himself what he will—than fully to restore to him the freedom to be, what he ought to be.

But by this means something infinite is attained. For as soon as we call to mind that this very freedom is taken from him by the unequal compulsion of nature in perception, and by the excluding legislation of reason in reflection, we must consider the ability which is restored to him in the æsthetic inclination, as the highest of all gifts—as the gift of humanity. He certainly possesses in *disposition* this humanity, before each definite condition into which he can arrive, but in *fact* he loses it with every definite condition into which he comes, and it must be restored to him each time anew by the æsthetic life, if he would pass over to an opposite condition.\*

\* It is true, the rapidity with which certain characters proceed from perception to reflection and resolution, will permit us hardly, or not at all, to recognise the æsthetic state, through which in this

Then it is not only poetically allowable, but also philosophically correct, to call Beauty our second creatress. For although she has made humanity only possible to us, and for the rest has left it to our free will, how far we will make it actual, she has it in common with our original creatress, Nature—who, in like manner, has only bestowed the ability for humanity, but has left its use to our own volition.

time they must necessarily pass. Such minds cannot long endure the condition of indeterminateness, and press impatiently after a result, which they do not find in the boundlessness of the æsthetic condition. On the contrary, the æsthetic condition displays itself in a far greater surface among those who find more satisfaction in the feeling of *entire ability* than in any one of its *single* operations. The latter can endure restriction with as little pleasure as the first regard vacuity. I hardly need mention that the first are calculated for detail and subordinate occupations; the latter—supposing that they combine reality with this ability—for entirety and distinguished parts.

## TWENTY-SECOND LETTER.

If, then, the æsthetic inclination of the mind must be considered in one respect as *null*, as soon, namely, as we direct our attention to single and definite actions, it is still to be regarded in another respect as a condition of the *highest* reality, so far as we thereby consider the absence of all limits, and the totality of powers, which are mutually active in that condition. Then we can as little blame those who declare the æsthetic state to be the most fruitful with respect to knowledge and morality. Their views are perfectly just, since a mental inclination which comprehends in itself the wholeness of humanity, must also necessarily include all its single manifestations, according to ability; a mental inclination which removes all limits from the wholeness of human nature, must necessarily remove them also from all its single manifestations. For the reason that it takes no single function of humanity exclusively under its protection, it is well-disposed towards each one without distinction, and favours no single one pre-eminently, since it is to all the basis of possibility. All other exercises give the mind a particular dexterity, but also confine it within a particular limit; the æsthetic alone leads to the unlimited. Every other condition to which we can arrive, refers us to a previous one, and requires for its development a subsequent one; the æsthetic alone is a whole in itself, since it combines within itself all the conditions for its origin and duration. Here alone do we feel ourselves snatched as it were from time; and our humanity unfolds itself with a purity and *integrity*, as if it had yet experienced no detriment from the in-working of external powers.

Whatever flatters our senses in immediate perception, opens our tender and susceptible mind to every impression, but also in the same degree makes us less capable of effort. Whatever exerts our reflective powers and invites to abstract conceptions, strengthens our spirit to every kind of resistance, but hardens it too in the same proportion, and deprives of as much susceptibility as it gains of greater self-activity. For this reason, one as well as the other necessarily lead at last to exhaustion, since neither matter can continue long without plastic power, nor power without susceptible matter. If on the contrary we have given ourselves up to the enjoyment of genuine Beauty, at such a moment we are equally master of our passive and active powers, and with equal facility do we address ourselves to the Serious and to Sport—to calm and to emotion—to compliance and to resistance—to abstract reflection and to intuition.

This lofty equanimity and freedom of spirit, united with power and activity, is the state in which a genuine work of art should leave us, and there is no surer touchstone of the true æsthetic quality. If, after an enjoyment of this kind, we find ourselves pre-eminently disposed to some one particular mode of feeling or action, unfit for and averse to another, it constitutes an unerring proof, that we have not experienced a *purely æsthetic* action; whether it be attributable to the object or to our mode of perception, or (as is almost always the case) at the same time to both.

As there is no pure æsthetic action to be met with in reality. (for man can never escape from dependence upon powers), the excellence of a work of art can only consist in its greater propinquity to that ideal of æsthetic purity; and with all the freedom which may be secured to it, we shall still leave it in a certain state and with a peculiar direction. The more universal, then, the state, and the less confined the direction is, which is given to our mind by a definite species of art, and by any of its definite products, the nobler is that species and the more eminent such a product. We can try this with

works of different arts, and with different works of the same art. We retire from exquisite music with a lively perception, from a beautiful poem with quickened imagination, from noble sculpture and architecture with excited intellect ; but whoever would invite us to abstract reflection directly after lofty musical enjoyment, to the performance of a formal duty of every-day life directly after superior poetical enjoyment, or would inflame our imagination and surprise our feelings directly after the contemplation of superior works of painting or sculpture, would make but an indifferent choice of time. The reason is, that even the most elevated music stands in a greater affinity to the senses *through its method of influence*, than true æsthetic freedom allows—that the most successful poem always participates more with the capricious and fortuitous play of the imagination, *as its medium*, than is permitted by the internal necessity of genuine Beauty—that the most eminent piece of sculpture—and this perhaps particularly—is nearly allied to the gravity of science *by the precision of its conception*. In the mean time these special affinities gradually disappear with the loftier standard attained by a work from these three kinds of art, and it is a necessary and natural result of their perfection, that, without abandoning their objective limits, the different arts always become more similar in *their action upon the mind*. Music in its loftiest excellence must become shape, and affect us with the tranquil power of an antique ; the plastic art in its highest consummation must become music, and move us by direct sensuous presence ; poetry in its most perfect development, must influence us with all the potency of music, but at the same time, like the plastic art, must surround us with a clear tranquillity. Consummate style in every art manifests itself, in knowing how to remove its specific limits, without also abolishing its specific advantages, while a skilful improvement of its peculiarity bestows upon it a more universal character.

And the artist must not only overcome by his treatment the limits, which the specific character of his kind of art brings



with it, but also those which belong to the particular material which he elaborates. In a genuine work of art the subject should effect nothing, but the form everything; since the entirety of man is acted upon by form alone, but only single powers by the subject. However noble and comprehensive then the subject may be, it is always confined in its influence upon the spirit, and true æsthetic freedom is to be expected only from form. Herein then consists the art-secret of the master, *that by the form he abolishes the subject*; and the more imposing, assuming, attractive the subject is in itself, the more absolutely that it intrudes its operation, or the more inclined the observer is, to merge himself immediately in the subject, the more triumphant is the art which repels the former, and maintains authority over the latter. The mind of the spectator and hearer must remain entirely free and inviolable; it should pass from the magic circle of the artist, pure and perfect as from the hands of the Creator. The most frivolous object must be so handled, that we remain disposed to pass immediately from that to one of sober earnest. The gravest subject must be so handled, that we retain the capability of exchanging it immediately for the lightest sport. The arts of Emotion, such as tragedy, are no exception; for, in the first place, those arts are not entirely free, since they are enlisted in the service of a particular design (the pathetic), and then too no real connoisseur will deny, that works, even those of the latter class, are more perfect, the more they respect the freedom of the mind in the highest storm of emotion. There is a fine art of the passions, but a fine pathetic art is a contradiction, since the infallible effect of Beauty is freedom from passion. No less contradictory is the idea of a fine teaching (didactic) or improving (moral) art, since nothing conflicts more with the conception of Beauty, than to give the mind a definite tendency.

Yet a want of form is not always evinced by a work, when it produces an effect by its subject alone; for it may as often result from a deficiency of form in the critic. If the latter is

either too intended or too relaxed, and accustomed to regard things either only by the intellect or only by the senses, he will confine himself only to the parts even in the most successful whole, and only to the subject-matter in the fairest form. Affected only by the rude *element*, he is first obliged to destroy the æsthetic organization of a work, before he can find satisfaction in it, and to pick out laboriously the single traits, which the master with infinite art had caused to disappear in the harmony of the whole. His interest therein is either positively moral or positively physical; only it is not—what it should be—æsthetical. Such readers relish a serious and pathetic poem, like a sermon, and a naïf or comical one, like an intoxicating drink; and were they sufficiently tasteless, to require *edification* from a tragedy and epic, were it even a Messiah, so they would infallibly take offence at a song of Anacreon or Catullus.

## TWENTY-THIRD LETTER.

I AGAIN resume the thread of my inquiries, which I have interrupted only to make the application of the principles established, to practical art and to a criticism of its works.

Then the passage from the passive condition of perception to the active one of reflection and volition, is only effected by an intermediate condition of æsthetic freedom; and although this condition determines of itself nothing either for our judgments or dispositions, consequently leaving our intellectual and moral worth entirely problematical, yet it is the necessary stipulation, by which alone we can attain to a judgment and a disposition. In a word, there is no other way of making the sensuous man rational, than by first making him æsthetical.

But, you may object, ought this mediation to be actually indispensable? Should not truth and duty be able to effect an entry into the sensuous man for and by themselves alone? To this I must reply, that if they cannot, they must in fact, impute it only to their own determining power; and nothing would be more at variance with my previous assertions, than if they had the appearance of favouring the opposite opinion. It has been explicitly proved that Beauty affords no result either to the intellect or the volition; that it interferes in no operation either of reflection or resolution; that it only imparts to both the ability, but leaves the actual use of this ability wholly undefined. Thus all external assistance is removed, and the pure logical form, the idea, must address itself directly to the intellect; the pure moral form, the law, directly to the volition.

But to effect this—to produce a pure form for the sensuous

man—this I maintain, can only be rendered possible by the æsthetic inclination of the mind. Truth is nothing that can be externally perceived like reality or the sensuous existence of things; it is something that self-acting and independent reflection educes, and it is this self-activity, this freedom, that we miss in the sensuous man. The latter is already defined (physically), and consequently has no longer any free determinableness; which he must necessarily first recover, before he can exchange the passive for an active determination. But he can only recover it, either by resigning the passive determination which he had, or *by already containing within himself* the active, to which he should pass. If he only resigned his passive determination, he would at the same time resign the possibility of an active one, since thought and form require subject-matter for their manifestation. Then he must contain the latter within himself; he must at the same time be passively and actively defined, that is, he must become æsthetical.

Then by the æsthetic state of the mind is the self-activity of the reason displayed on the field of sensuousness, the force of perception already weakened within its own sphere, and the physical man so far ennobled, that the spiritual need only unfold itself from the former according to the laws of freedom. Hence the step from the æsthetical to the logical and moral condition (from Beauty to truth and duty), becomes infinitely easier, than was the step from the physical to the æsthetical condition (from the mere blind life to form). Man can achieve this step by his pure freedom, since he only need to receive and not to give, only to disunite his nature, not to amplify it; the æsthetical <sup>man</sup> will decide and act with universal validity, as soon as he wills so to do. Nature must facilitate the step from rude matter to Beauty, where an entirely new activity should be developed within him, and his will cannot exercise authority over an inclination, which is only imparted to it by his existence. In order to conduct the æsthetic man to insight and lofty sentiment, we only need present to him forcible incentives: but to obtain the same from

the sensuous man, we must first change his nature. To make the former a hero or a philosopher, often nothing is needed but the demands of an elevated situation (which most intimately affects the volition); but, for a similar result, we must first transplant the latter beneath another sky.

Then the most important task of culture consists in subjecting man to form while yet in his pure physical life, and in making him æsthetical, so far only as the realm of Beauty can ever extend—since the moral condition can unfold itself only from the æsthetical, and not from the physical condition. If man would possess the ability in every single case, to make his judgment and his will the judgment of the race, to find the passage to an infinite from every limited existence, to rise from every condition of dependence to freedom and independence, he must beware that he is at no moment a mere individual, serving only the laws of nature. Should he be capable and ready to soar from the narrow sphere of nature's aims to those of reason, he must have already trained himself *within the first* for the last, and have prosecuted his physical determinateness with a certain spiritual freedom—that is, according to the laws of Beauty.

And indeed he can accomplish this without contradicting in the least his physical aim. The demands of his nature only extend to that *which he works, to the contents* of his action; the design of nature determines nothing concerning the *manner* of his action, or its form. The demands of reason, on the contrary, are strongly directed to the form of his activity. Then, however necessary it is for his moral determinateness, that he should be purely moral, ~~that~~ he should evince an absolute self-activity, it is of little consequence for his physical determinateness, whether or not he is purely physical, whether he maintains a state of absolute passivity. With respect then to the latter, it is entirely at his option whether he will prosecute it merely as a sensuous being, and *as a power* of nature (as a power, namely, which only acts according *as it* is acted upon), or whether at ~~the~~ *the same time* as absolute power,

as a rational being; and there need be no question which of the two is more conformable to his dignity. But rather, as much as it humbles and debases him, to do that from sensuous motives, which he should have imposed upon himself from pure motives of duty, so much does it honour and ennoble him to strive after conformity, harmony, and boundlessness, where the common man only stifles a lawful inclination.\* In a word—perception should have nothing to define in the province of truth and morality; but form and the play-impulse should exist and govern in the sphere of felicity.

Already here, then, in the neutral field of physical life, must man commence his moral being; while yet in his passivity he must begin his self-activity—and while still within his sensuous restrictions he must commence his intellectual freedom. Already he must impose the law of his will upon his inclinations; he must, if I may be allowed the expression,

\* This spiritual and æsthetical free treatment of common reality, wherever it is to be met with, is the token of a noble soul. Generally we call a mind noble, which possesses the gift of transforming the most limited occupation, and the most trifling object into an infinite one, by its method of treatment. We call that form noble, which impresses the seal of self-dependence upon that which naturally only *suberves* (is merely a means). A noble spirit is not satisfied with being free itself; it would place all other things around it, even the inanimate, in freedom. But beauty is the only possible expression of freedom in actual life. The predominant expression of *intellect* in a face, a work of art, and the like—can never acquire the character of nobility, neither is it ever beautiful, since, instead of concealing, it makes conspicuous, the dependence, which is confounded with conformity to a design.

It is true, the moral philosopher teaches us, that one can never do *more* than his duty; and he is perfectly right, if he means only the relation which actions have to moral law. But it is said of actions, which, relating merely to a design, yet pass out *beyond this design* into the super-sensuous (which here can be called nothing else than carrying out the physical æsthetically) that they *exceed duty*, while the latter can only prescribe the inviolability of

play the battle against matter within its own borders, that he may be spared from resisting the fearful foe on the holy soil of freedom; he must learn to *desire nobly*, that he may not be forced to *will loftily*. This is accomplished by æsthetic culture, which subjects all that in which human caprice is unconstrained by the laws of Nature, or the laws of Beauty by those of reason—and which already reveals the internal, in the form which it gives to the external—life.

the *will*, but not the previous inviolability of nature. So that indeed there is no moral, but there is an æsthetic, excess of duty, and such a deportment is called noble. But, because an overplus is always perceptible in him who is noble—which possesses too a free, formal value, when it need only have a material value, or which unites to an internal value which it ought to have, also an external value which it might dispense with—many have confounded æsthetic with moral overplus—and, seduced by the appearance of what is noble, have introduced a caprice and chance into morality itself, whereby it would become entirely abolished.

A noble deportment is to be distinguished from an elevated one. The former is the result of moral obligation, but not so the latter, although we respect it unduly higher than the former. But we do not respect it because it exceeds the rational idea of its Object, (the moral law), but the actual idea of its Subject (our knowledge of the quality and vigour of human will); so inversely we do not value noble deportment, because it transgresses the nature of the Subject, from which it rather must result entirely unconstrained, but because it passes beyond the nature of its Object, (the physical design) into the super-sensuous. In the one case, it may be said, we are astonished at the victory which the object obtains over man; in the other, we wonder at the scope which man gives to the object.

## TWENTY-FOURTH LETTER.

THERE may be distinguished three different moments or epochs of development, through which the single man as well as the whole race must pass necessarily and in a prescribed order, if they would complete the whole circle of their destiny. It is true, the single periods can now be protracted, now abridged, through accidental causes, which lie either in the influence of external things or in man's free caprice, but none can be entirely omitted; and the order too in which they follow each other, can neither be inverted by nature nor the will. Man in his *physical* condition, endures only the force of nature; he frees himself from this force in the *æsthetical*, and governs it in the *moral* condition.

What is man, before Beauty steals from him his free enjoyment and tranquil form tempers his savage life? Is he not ever uniform in his designs; ever vacillating in his decisions; selfish, without being yet himself; unrestrained, without being free; a slave, without subserving a principle? In this epoch the world is merely fate to him, but no object; all has an existence for him, only so far as it makes him to exist:—what neither gives nor takes, is to him non-existent. Every phenomenon stands before him, single and isolated, as he finds himself in the scale of being. All that is, is to him only through the emphasis of the moment; each change is to him a fresh creation, since, through failure of the Necessary *within*, he wants that *external* necessity, which gathers all mutable shapes into one universe, and retains eternal law upon the stage, while the individual melts away. In vain does nature display



her rich manifoldness before his senses; in her majestic fulness he sees only his booty, in her power and greatness only his foe. He either throws himself upon the outward, invading it with wild desire, or the outward presses ruinously upon him, and is thrust back with aversion. In both cases direct *contact* is his relation to the world of sense, and being for ever disturbed by its pressure, unceasingly distressed by imperious need, he finds rest nowhere but in exhaustion, and no limits but in sated desire.

His truly are the Titan's mighty heart  
And forceful life—a heritage assured;  
Yet God has forged a brazen ring around  
His brow, and hidden from his gloomy eye  
Patience and wisdom, counsel and restraint.  
Each passion swells to madness, and unchecked  
His madness rages.\*

Unacquainted with *his own* human dignity, he is far from revering it in others; and conscious of his own wild passion, he fears it in every creature that resembles him. He never beholds others in himself, but only himself in others; and society, instead of expanding him to a genus, only confines him more and more closely to his individuality. Thus unworthily restricted, he wanders through his starless life, till an auspicious nature tosses the dull load of matter from his beclouded senses, till reflection distinguishes *himself* from things, and objects at last manifest themselves in his reflected consciousness.

This condition of rude nature as here portrayed, is certainly not referrible to any particular age or nation; it is a mere idea, but one which in single features coincides most strictly with experience. We may say that man was never in a condition so utterly brutal, but he has never entirely avoided it. We find even in the rudest subjects scarcely discernible traces of rational

\* Altered from Goethe's "Iphigenie auf Tauris." A. I. Sc. iii.

freedom, just as moments are not wanting in the most cultivated, which remind us of that gloomy state of nature. It is in fact peculiar to man, to combine the highest and the lowest in his nature, and if his *dignity* depends upon a rigid distinction of the one from the other, his *happiness* depends upon an apt removal of this distinction. Culture, which ought to harmonize his dignity with his happiness, must then take care to preserve the highest purity of these two principles in their most intimate union.

Therefore the first appearance of reason in man, is not also the commencement of his humanity. That is first determined by his freedom, and the reason first begins by removing the limits to his sensuous dependence; a phenomenon which does not yet appear to me to be unfolded according to its importance and universality. The reason, we know, makes itself recognised in man by the demand of the absolute (the self-grounded and necessary), which, as it cannot be satisfied in any single condition of his physical life, is compelled utterly to leave to him the physical, and to ascend from restricted reality to ideas. But although the real intention of that demand is, to free him from the fetters of time and elevate him from a sensuous to an ideal world, yet through a misconception (hardly avoidable in this epoch of prevailing sensuousness), it may direct itself toward the physical life, and, instead of making man independent, plunge him in the most fearful bondage.

And this in fact takes place. Man deserts the narrow limits of the present, in which mere animality had enclosed him, upon the wings of imagination, with aspirations after a boundless future; but while the infinite dawns upon his dazzled imagination, his heart has not yet ceased to live in the partial, and to serve the present moment. The desire for the absolute surprises him in the midst of his animality—and since all his endeavours in this miserable condition tend only towards the material and finite, and are restricted only to his individual being, he is only induced by this demand to give his individuality a boundless extension, instead of abandoning it—to strive

after an exhaustless substance instead of form—after an ever-during mutation instead of the immutable, and after an absolute establishment of his finite being. The same impulse which inclines him to thought and action, which ought to lead to truth and morality, now brings, when related to his passivity and perception, nothing but a boundless longing, an absolute need. The first fruits then, which he earns in the spirit-world, are *care* and *fear*; both being operations of reason, not of sensuousness—but of a reason which mistakes its object, and applies its Imperative immediately to substance. All unconditioned systems of happiness are fruits of this tree—they may have for their object the present day or a whole life, or, what makes them no more respectable, a whole eternity. A boundless duration of existence and well-being, merely for the sake of existence and well-being, is only an ideal of desire—consequently a demand which can only be started by an animality striving after the absolute. Without then gaining anything for his humanity by such a manifestation of reason, one loses thereby only the happy confinement of the animal; instead of which, he merely possesses the unenviable advantage of missing the possession of the present in his aspiration for the distant, and yet without seeking in the whole boundless distance anything but the present.

But even if the reason should not mistake its object, nor err in its interrogation, yet sensuousness for a long time would falsify the answer. As soon as man has begun to use his intellect, and to combine the actual modes around him, according to cause and design, the reason, conformably to its ideas, insists upon an absolute combination and an unconditional cause. Man must have already transgressed his sensuousness, before he can only raise such a demand; but this very demand has the effect to bring back the wanderer. Here then would be the point, where he must entirely desert the world of sense, and soar to the realm of pure idea; for the intellect remains for ever stationary within the conditioned, for ever interrogating, without arriving at a result. But as the man, of

whom we speak here, is not yet capable of such an abstraction, whatever he does not find in his sensuous cognitive sphere, or does not yet seek above that in the sphere of pure reason, he will seek and to all appearance find beneath that, within his sphere of *feeling*. Sensuousness indeed shows him nothing, which might be its own cause, or give law to itself, but it shows him something, which knows of no cause and respects no law. As then he can bring the interrogating intellect to repose through no final and interior cause, he brings it at least to silence through the idea of *causelessness*; and he remains stationary within the blind necessitation of matter, as he cannot yet comprehend the elevated necessity of reason. Since sensuousness knows no other aim than its own interest, and feels impelled to it by no other cause than blind chance, it makes the former the determinator of its actions, and the latter the ruler of the world.

Even moral law itself, the holy in man, cannot, at its first appearance in the sensuous world, escape this corruption. As it is only prohibitory, and declares against the interest of his sensuous self-love, it must seem to him—so long as there is anything foreign, to which he has not attained—to regard that self-love as that which is foreign, and the voice of reason as his true self. He is then sensible only of the fetters which that voice imposes upon him, not of the infinite freedom which it creates for him. Without respecting in himself the dignity of a legislator, he is only sensible of the constraint and the powerless resistance of a subject. Since the sensuous *precedes* the moral impulse in his experience, he gives to the law of necessity a beginning in time, a *positive origin*; and makes, by the most unhappy of all errors, the unchangeable and eternal in himself an accident of the finite. He persuades himself to regard the ideas of right and wrong as statutes emanating from a will, and not valid in themselves and to all eternity. As he transgresses nature in the explanation of single natural phenomena, and seeks without her, for that which can only be found in her inmost conformableness, even

so he transgresses reason in the explanation of moral phenomena, and, while seeking in this path a divinity, sacrifices his humanity. No wonder, if a religion which is bought by a rejection of his humanity, should prove worthy of such an origin, or if he should not consider absolute nor binding *to* all eternity, the laws which he did not hold binding *from* all eternity. He has to do, not with a holy, but only with a powerful, being. The spirit of his worship then is fear, which debases him, and not reverence, which would elevate him, in his own estimation.

Although these manifold deviations of man from the ideal of his destiny cannot exist in the same epoch, while he is traversing many grades from voidness of reflection to error, from a lack of will to a perversity of will, yet all these are proper results of the physical condition, because in all men the life-impulse plays the master over the form-impulse. But suppose that the reason has not yet declared itself in man, and that the physical still sways him with blind necessity, or that the reason has not yet sufficiently rid itself of the senses, and that the moral yet serves the physical—in both cases the only ruling principle within him is a material one, and the man, at least according to his last tendency, is a sensuous being—with this only difference, that in the first case he is an irrational, in the second a rational, animal. But he should be neither—he should be man. Nature should not govern him exclusively, nor the reason conditionally. The legislation of both should subsist in a perfect independence of the other, and yet in perfect harmony.

## TWENTY-FIFTH LETTER.

So long as man, in his first physical condition, is only passively receptive of the world of sense, only perceives, he is still completely one with it; and there is no world for him, because he himself is only world. If, in his æsthetical state, he places or contemplates it beyond himself, his personality is for the first time distinct, and there appears to him a world, because he has ceased to identify himself with it.\*

Contemplation (reflection) is the first unconstrained relation of man to the universe which surrounds him. While desire directly embraces its object, reflection removes its own to a distance, and by thus anticipating the passions, secures it for a true and inalienable possession. The necessity of nature, which governed him with absolute power in a merely perceptive condition, is displaced by reflection—an instantaneous calm

\* I have previously remarked, that both these periods are indeed necessarily distinct in idea, but are more or less mingled in experience. And we must not imagine, that any time has occurred when man found himself only in this physical condition, or a time when he had entirely freed himself from it. As soon as man *sees an object*, he is no longer in a condition merely physical, and so long as he will continue to see an object, he will not entirely escape a physical state, since his seeing only depends upon his perception. Those three moments which I mentioned in the commencement of the twenty-fourth letter, are then, it is true, three different epochs for the development of entire humanity, but they are to be distinguished in every single perception of an object, and in a word, are the necessary conditions of that knowledge which we obtain through the senses.

ensues in the senses; time itself, the ever changing, is stationary, while the scattered rays of consciousness are gathered, and Form, an image of the infinite, is reflected from the mirror of the finite. As soon as it becomes light in man, all outward darkness vanishes; as soon as inward calm possesses him, the storm in the universe abates, and the conflicting powers of nature find rest within permanent limits. No wonder, then, that the primitive poets spoke of ~~this~~ great occurrence in the inward life, as of a revolution in the outward world, and represented Thought, which subdues the decrees of Time, under the sensuous image of Jupiter, terminating the reign of Saturn.

From being a slave of nature, while he only perceives it, man becomes its lawgiver, as soon as he reflects upon it. Nature, which formerly ruled him only as *force*, now stands before him as *object*. What is object to him, has no power over him, since in order to become object, it must experience his own (power). So far and so long as he gives form to matter, he is impassive to its operations; because spirit can sustain injury only from that which takes away its freedom—and he establishes his own freedom while fashioning the formless. Fear has its seat, only where the mass prevails, all rude and shapeless, its dim outlines wavering between insecure limits; man is superior to every chimera of nature, as soon as he can give it form and convert it into his object. As he begins to maintain his independence against nature as phenomenal, he also maintains his dignity against nature as a force, and rises with noble freedom against its deities. They cast aside the spectre-masks, which had frightened his childhood, and in representing his conceptions, surprise him with his own image. The divine prodigy of the oriental, which blindly ruled the world with brute force, is fused beneath the Grecian fancy into the friendly contour of humanity, the empire of the Titans falls, and infinite power is tamed by infinite form.

But while I only sought an outlet from the material world and an entrance into the spirit: *of* the course of my imagination

has already led me within the latter. Beauty, which we seek, lies already behind us, and we have overleaped it, in passing directly from mere life to the pure shape and the pure object. Such a feat is not in the power of human nature, to keep pace with which, we must return again to the world of sense.

Beauty is entirely the work of free contemplation, and we advance with it into the world of idea—but, what is worthy of notice, without thereby leaving the sensuous world, as is the case in the recognition of truth. The latter is the pure precipitate of all that is material and accidental—pure object, having laid aside all subjective limits, and pure self-activity unmingled with passivity. It is true, there is a return to sensuousness from the highest abstraction, for thought affects the inward perception, and the conception of logical and moral unity results in a feeling of sensuous agreement. But when we are pleased with cognitions, we distinguish strictly our conception from our perception, and regard the latter as something contingent, which might well be omitted, without our cognition ceasing, or truth not becoming truth. But it would be an utterly fruitless attempt, to wish to separate this relation to the perceptive faculty from the conception of *Beauty*; for it is not sufficient to that purpose, to consider one as the effect of the other, but we must regard them both mutually and at the same time as effect and as cause. In our satisfaction at cognitions we distinguish without trouble the *passage* from activity to passivity, and actually observe that the first is over, when the latter appears. On the contrary, in our delight at Beauty no such succession between activity and passivity can be distinguished, and reflection is here so thoroughly blended with feeling, that we think the form is directly perceivable. Beauty then is indeed *object* for us, since reflection is the condition by which we perceive it; but at the same time it is a *condition of our subject*, because feeling is the condition by which we have a conception of it. Then it is form indeed, since we contemplate it, but at the same time it is life, since



we feel it. In a word, it is at the same time our condition and our act.

And because it is both at the same time, it affords us a triumphant proof, that passivity by no means excludes activity, or matter—form, or the limited the infinite—that consequently the *moral* freedom of man is by no means abolished by his necessary physical dependence. It proves this, and I may add, it *alone* can prove it to us. Since perception is not necessarily one with reflection, in the enjoyment of truth or of logical unity, but conditionally follows upon it, so it can only prove to us, that a sensuous may follow upon a rational nature and inversely—not that both may exist together—not that they influence each other reciprocally—not that they are absolutely and necessarily to be combined. On the contrary, we must rather infer from this exclusion of feeling, and perceive from that exclusion of thought, that it results from an *incompatibility* in both their natures, that is so long as the analyst can really adduce no better proof for the deduction of pure reason in humanity, than that it is so ordained. But since now an actual *association* and interchange of matter with form, and of passivity with activity, precedes enjoyment of Beauty or of *æsthetic* unity, it follows that we demonstrate thereby the *compatibility* of both natures, the practicability of the infinite in the finite—consequently, the possibility of the noblest humanity.

Then we need be no longer embarrassed to find a passage from sensuous dependence to moral freedom, when it occurs, by means of Beauty, that the latter may perfectly consist with the former, and man, to manifest himself as spirit, need not shun matter. But if he is already free in communion with sensuousness, as the fact of Beauty teaches, and if freedom is something absolute and supersensuous, qualities that necessarily accompany its idea—then there can be no longer a question, how he may succeed in elevating himself from the limited to the absolute, in opposing to sensuousness his reflection and volition, since it has already been brought to pass

through Beauty. In a word, we need no longer ask, how he passes from Beauty to truth, because the ability to do so already exists in the former—but, how he may construct a passage from a common to an æsthetic reality—from a sense of mere life to a sense of Beauty.

## TWENTY-SIXTH LETTER.

As the æsthetic inclination of the mind, as I have explained in the preceding letters, gives the first impulse to freedom, it is easy to perceive that it cannot result from freedom, and consequently can have no moral origin. It must be a gift of nature; favouring accident alone can loose the bonds of the physical condition, and lead the savage to the shrine of Beauty.

The germ of Beauty will unfold, as little where a penurious nature robs man of every solace, as where a prodigal one releases him from every proper exertion — as little where dull sensuousness feels no want, as where violent desire finds no satiety. The tender bud will lovingly expand, not where man the troglodyte immures himself in caverns, for ever single, and never finding humanity *beyond* himself, nor where man the nomad roves in caravans, for ever plural, and never finding humanity *within* himself — but there only, where he communes with himself in his own dwelling, and when he issues from it, speaks in sympathy with the whole race. Where a genial climate prepares the senses for every tender emotion, and invigorating warmth inspires exuberant matter — where the reign of blind substance in the lifeless creation is already overthrown, and triumphant form ennobles even the basest natures — in those fortunate circumstances and in that favoured zone, where only activity leads to pleasure, and only pleasure to activity; where heavenly order flows out of life itself, and only life unfolds itself from the law of order; where the imagination for ever shuns reality, and yet is never untrue to the simplicity of nature — there alone will *force* and spirit, perceptive and

creative power, display themselves in that happy equality, which is the soul of Beauty and the condition of humanity.

And what phenomenon is that, by which the access of the savage to humanity announces itself? So far as we consult history, we find it the same in all races, who have arisen from the slavery of the animal condition—delight in *show*, inclination for *ornament* and for *play*.

The greatest stupidity and the greatest intelligence have herein a certain affinity with each other, that both seek only the *solid*, and are utterly insensible to mere show. The former can be awaked from its repose, only by the immediate sensible presence of an object, and the latter can be brought to repose, only by tracing back its ideas to the data of experience; in a word, dulness can never lift itself above reality, and intellect can never remain stationary beneath the truth. So far then as need of reality and attachment to the actual are results of deficiency, so far is indifference to reality and interest in show, a true enlargement of humanity and a decisive step towards culture. In the first place, it is a production of an external freedom; for the imagination is bound with tight fetters to the actual, so long as necessity controls and want is pressing; and it displays its unlimited faculties only when want is appeased. But it is also produced by an internal freedom, since it reveals to us a power, which is put into motion by itself, independently of an external substance, and which possesses sufficient energy to repel the approaches of matter. The reality of things is the work of things; the show of things is the work of man; and a mind that is entertained with show, is no longer pleased by that which it receives, but by that which it does.

It is self-evident, that we here speak only of æsthetic show, which we distinguish from reality and truth, and not of logical show, which we confound with them—the former of which we consequently love, because it is show, and not because we esteem it anything better. The first only is play, as the last is merely deceit. To attach any consequence to show of the

first kind, can never injure truth, since we never incur the risk of substituting it for that which is the only method of injuring truth—namely, a contempt for all the fine arts generally, whose existence depends upon show. Meanwhile it sometimes happens to the intellect, to carry its zeal for reality to just such a pitch of intolerance, and to condemn all the fine arts of show, because it is merely show; but this only happens when the intellect recollects the above supposed affinity. I will take this opportunity to speak particularly of the necessary limits of show in the fine arts.

Nature itself is that which elevates man from reality to show, in providing him with two senses, which conduct him, only through show, to a knowledge of the actual. Importunate matter is repelled from the senses by the eye and ear, and the object with which we come in direct contact through the lower senses, is placed at a distance. What we *see* by the eye, is different from that which we *perceive*; for the intellect overleaps the medium (light) and apprehends the objects. The object of touch is a force, which we suffer; the object of the eye and ear is a form, which we create. While man is yet a savage, he finds pleasure only in the sense of feeling, which, in this period, the sense of show only subserves. Either he does not elevate himself to seeing, or he finds no satisfaction in it. As soon as he begins to enjoy with the eye, and seeing acquires for him a substantial value, he is æsthetically free, and the play-impulse has developed itself.

As soon as the play-impulse has become active, which finds satisfaction in show, the imitative forming impulse ensues, which treats show as something substantial. When man has so far succeeded, as to distinguish show from reality, form from body, he is in a condition to separate them from himself; which, in distinguishing them, he has already done. Then the ability for imitative art is generally bestowed with the ability to appreciate form; the motive to this depends upon another tendency, which I need not discuss here. Whether the æsthetic art-impulse should unfold itself early or late, will depend only

upon the degree of love, with which man is capable of contenting himself with mere show.

As all actual existence is referrible to nature, as a foreign force, but all show to man originally, as creative subject, he exercises only his absolute right of possession, when he reclaims show from the actual, and deals with it according to his own laws. He can unite with unbounded freedom what nature has separated, if it only unites in his reflection, and can separate what nature has combined, if he can only make the distinction in his understanding. Here nothing need be inviolate to him, but his own law—if he only regards the boundary line which divides *his* province from actual existence or the laws of nature.

He exercises the human right of sovereignty in the *art of show*, and the more strictly he there makes the distinction of mine and thine, the more carefully he separates shape from actual existence, and the more substantiality he knows how to give it, so much the more will he not only enlarge the sphere of Beauty, but preserve the limits of truth itself; for he cannot purify show from reality, without at the same time making reality independent of show.

But he really possesses this sovereign right only in the *world of show*, in the unsubstantial realm of the imagination, and only so long as he scrupulously abstains theoretically, from predicating Existence thereon, and so long as he renounces practically, any attempt at imparting Existence thereby. Hence you see, that the poet transgresses his proper limits, equally when he imputes existence to his ideal, and when he designs thereby a determinate existence. For he cannot accomplish both any otherwise than either by exceeding his poetic right, encroaching into province of experience through the ideal, and pretending to define existence through the mere possibility of actual existence—or by resigning his poetic right, allowing experience to encroach upon the province of the ideal, and confining possible determinableness to the conditions of reality.

Show is æsthetic, only so far as it is *upright* (positively renouncing all claims to reality), and only so far as it is *independent* (dispensing with all support of reality). As soon as it is false and feigns reality, and as soon as it is adulterated, and requires reality for its operation, it is nothing but a vile instrument for material purposes, and can demonstrate nothing for freedom of the spirit. *Au reste*, it is not necessary, that the object in which we find the show of Beauty, should be destitute of reality, if only in our judgment we have no regard to this reality; for so far as we regard that, it is not æsthetical. Indeed an animate female beauty will charm us as well, and perhaps a little better, than a mere picture, however beautiful; but in so far as it pleases us better than the latter, it pleases us no more as independent show, it pleases no more the pure, æsthetic feeling, which the living may please only as an actual mode, the actual only as idea: but in fact, a disproportionately higher degree of polite culture is required, to perceive in the living itself only the pure show, than to dispense with life in the latter.

In whatever single man or whole people we find the upright and independent show, there we may infer the existence of spirit and taste and every congenial excellence—there we may see the ideal swaying the actual, honour triumphing over worldly possession, reflection over enjoyment, and the dream of immortality over existence. There the public voice will be the only fearful thing, and an olive-wreath more honourable than a purple robe. Only impotency and perversity take refuge in false and needy show; and single men as well as whole people, who either “assist really by show or (æsthetic) show by reality”—both are intimately allied—prove at the same time their moral worthlessness and their æsthetic incapacity.

To the question, then, “*how far may show exist in the moral world?*” the answer is both brief and conclusive, *in so far as it is æsthetic show*, that is, show which will neither spurn reality nor needs to be spurned by it. “Then æsthetic show can never

become dangerous to the truth of morality; and where we find it otherwise, it can be shown without difficulty, that the show was not æsthetical. For example, none but a stranger to polite intercourse would regard the assurances of civility, which is an universal form, as tokens of personal regard, and when deceived, find fault with the deception. But only a bungler in polite intercourse would call falsehood to his aid, in order to be polite, and flatter, in order to be agreeable. A sense for independent show is wanting in the first, hence he can only give significance to it by supposing it reality; and reality is wanting to the second, and he would readily compensate it by show.

Nothing is more common, than to hear from certain frivolous critics of the age the complaint, that all solidity has vanished from the world, and that the essence is neglected for the show. Although I do not feel myself called upon to vindicate the age against this aspersion, it is sufficiently evident from the wide extension which these severe censors give to their complaint, that they not only blame the age for the false, but also for the upright show; and even the exceptions which they make at any time in favour of Beauty, relate rather to dependent than to independent show. They not only inveigh against the deceitful colouring, which conceals the truth and pretends to spurn reality; they also wax violent against the beneficent show, which fills vacuity and covers wretchedness, and against that ideal, which ennobles a common reality. A false morality justly offends their austere sense of truth; only it is a pity, that they should esteem courtesy a part of this falseness. They are displeased that external glitter so often eclipses true merit, but they are no less chagrined, that we should demand show from merit, and not excuse the internal capacity from manifesting agreeable form. They miss the hearty, the substantial, and the cordial of former times, but they might also see restored the sharpness and coarseness of the first manners, the ungainliness of old forms, and the old Gothic exuberance. By criticisms of this kind they evince a respect for *substance in itself*,



unworthy of a humanity, which rather should value material only so far as it is susceptible of receiving shape and of enlarging the realm of ideas. Then the taste of the century need not lend a ready ear to such voices, if it only in other respects stands before a better tribunal. Not that we impute a value to æsthetic show (we have long done this imperfectly), but that we have not yet applied it to pure show, that we have not sufficiently distinguished existence from phenomenon, thereby settling the boundaries of both for ever—this it is, with which a rigorous judge of Beauty might reproach us. And this reprehension we shall deserve, so long as we cannot enjoy the beautiful in animated nature, without coveting it, or admire the beautiful in imitative art, without demanding its utility—so long as we allow no single, absolute legislation to the fancy, and direct it to its own dignity, by the respect which we create for its works.

## TWENTY-SEVENTH LETTER.

FEAR nothing for reality and truth, if the lofty idea which I have inculcated in the preceding letters upon æsthetic show, should become universal. It will not become so, so long as man is sufficiently unpolished, to be able to abuse it; and should it become so, it can only be effected by a culture which at the same time makes every abuse impossible. More power of abstraction, more freedom of heart, more energy of will, is demanded in striving for independent show, than man requires in restricting himself to reality; and the latter must already lie behind him, if he would press forward to the former. How badly, then, would he calculate, who should take the road to the ideal, in order to avoid the road to the actual! Then we might not have much to dread for reality, from show, as it is here represented; but so much the more fear for show from reality. Chained to the material, man is all this time only serving his own designs, before he allows to show a special personality in the art of the Ideal. He requires for the last a total revolution in his whole mode of perception, without which he would never find himself *on the way* to the ideal. Where then we discover a disinterested, free estimation of pure show, we can there infer such an inversion of his nature and the proper commencement of humanity. But traces of this kind are really found in the first rude trials which he makes for the *refinement* of his being—made too at the risk of impairing its sensuous capacity. Generally as soon as he begins to prefer shape to substance, and hazard reality for show (but which therefore he must recognise), the circle of his animal being uncloses, and he finds himself upon a path that never ends.

Not content with that only which satisfies nature and meets the present need, he desires a superfluity; at first indeed only a superfluity of *substance*, in order to hide from desire its true limits, and to insure enjoyment enough for the present want, but soon a superfluity *in the substance*, an æsthetic surplus, in order to content also the form-impulse, and to extend enjoyment to every possible want. When only collecting material for a future use and anticipating this in imagination, he transgresses indeed the present moment, but without transgressing time; he enjoys *more*, but still no differently than before. But while he draws shape into his enjoyment, and at the same time regards the form of objects which satisfy his desires, he has not only enhanced his enjoyment in extent and *degree*, but also ennobled it in *kind*.

Indeed, nature has already yielded necessity to the irrational, and cast a gleam of freedom into the gloom of animal existence. If no hunger gnaws the lion, and no beast of prey provokes to battle, his slumbering energy creates for itself an object; he fills the echoing waste with vehement roaring, and his exuberant power satiates itself in an aimless effusion. The insect revels joyously in the sunshine, and certainly it is not the note of desire only which we hear in the bird's melodious warbling. In these emotions there is undeniable freedom, but not generally freedom from need, only from a definite, external need. The beast *labours*, when a want is the incitement to its activity, and it *plays*, when profusion of vigour is this incitement, when superfluous life is its own stimulus to activity. Even in inanimate nature, such a luxury of power and laxity of determinateness is manifest, which in that material sense we may properly call play. The tree puts forth countless buds, which are never developed, and extends more roots, twigs and leaves for nourishment, than are demanded for its individual preservation or that of its species. Whatever of its prodigal fulness it restores unused and unenjoyed to the elements, may be lavished by animate nature in joyous emotion. Thus nature already gives us in its material kingdom a

prelude of the unlimited, and removes there the fetters *in part* which in the kingdom of Form it entirely throws aside. It finds a passage to æsthetic play from the constraint of need, or *physical seriousness*, through the constraint of superfluity, or *physical play*; and before it soars in the lofty freedom of Beauty away from the fetters of each design, it approaches this state of independence, at least from afar, in the *free emotion*, which is both end and means.

The imagination of man, like his corporeal organs, has also its free emotion and its material play, in which it merely enjoys its native power and liberty, without any reference to shape. Yet so far as this play of fancy includes nothing of form, and its whole attraction consists in an unconstrained flow of images, it pertains, although peculiar to man alone, merely to his animal life, and only demonstrates his immunity from every external sensuous constraint, without yet developing an independent creative power.\* The imagination in its attempt at a *formal freedom*, makes at length a leap to æsthetic play, from this *free play of ideas*, which is of a kind entirely material, and is explained by the simple laws of nature. We must call it a leap, since an entirely new power comes here into requi-

\* Most of the sports which are in vogue in common life, depend either entirely upon this feeling of the free play of ideas, or derive from it their greatest attraction. But however little it evinces in itself a higher nature, and however readily the weakest souls are accustomed to resign themselves to this free current of images, yet this independence of the fancy of external impressions, is at least the negative condition for its creative faculty. The plastic art elevates itself to the ideal, only while tearing itself from reality, and the imagination must have freed itself from foreign laws, by its reproductive process, before it can act according to its own laws, in its productive quality. Indeed a still greater step is to be taken from mere lawlessness to a self-dependent internal conformity—and an entirely new power, the ability for ideas, must here be brought into play: but this power can now unfold itself with more facility, since the senses do not oppose it, and the indefinite borders, at least negatively, upon the infinite.

sition; for the directing spirit for the first time interferes in the operations of a blind instinct, subjects the arbitrary process of the imagination to its immutable, eternal unity, and infuses its self-dependence into the changeable, and its infiniteness into the sensuous. But so long as rude nature, which knows no other law than restlessly to hasten from change to change, is still too powerful, it will oppose that necessity by its unsteady caprice, that stability by its unrest, that self-dependence by its neediness, and that elevated simplicity by its insatiety. Then the æsthetic play-impulse will be hardly recognised in its first attempts, as the sensuous impulse incessantly interposes with its capricious humour and its wild desire. Hence we see the uncultivated taste embracing first the novel and surprising, the extravagant, wonderful, and bizarre, the vehement and wild; and avoiding nothing so much as calmness and simplicity. It fashions grotesque shapes, delights in harsh transitions, exuberent forms, dazzling contrasts, glaring lights, pathetic tones. In this epoch it only calls that beautiful which excites it, which gives it substance—but which excites to a self-acting opposition, and gives it substance for a *possible image*, for otherwise it would not possess for it the character of Beauty. Then a remarkable alteration takes place in the form of its decisions; it seeks these objects not since they give it something to endure, but something to act upon; they please it not because they meet a want, but because they satisfy a law which speaks, although still gently, in its bosom.

Soon man is no longer satisfied, that things please him; he himself wishes to please, at first indeed only by that which is *his own*, but finally by that which *he is*. What he possesses or produces, need bear no longer the traces of servitude, the straightened form of his design; next to the service which it renders, it must also reflect the ingenious intellect which conceived it, the ready hand which performed it, and the serene and free spirit which selected and expressed it. Now the ancient German seeks for splendid skins, stately antlers, orna-

mental drinking horns; and the Caledonian chooses the finest cockles for his feasts. Weapons themselves need no longer be mere objects of terror, but of pleasure also, and the cunning shoulder-belt will be no less noticeable, than the deadly edge of the sword. Not content with introducing an æsthetic surplus into the necessary, the play-impulse finally rids itself entirely from the fetters of exigency, and Beauty for her own sake becomes the object of its endeavour. Man *adorns* himself. Unconstrained joy is reckoned among his wants, and the unnecessary soon makes the best part of his pleasures.

As form gradually approaches him from without, in his dwelling, his furniture, his garments, it begins at last to take possession of himself—at first only transforming the outward, at last also the inward man. The unchartered elasticity of joy resolves itself into the dance, shapeless gesture into a graceful, harmonious language of action; the chaos of sound unfolds itself to the perception, and begins to obey time and acknowledge harmony. The Trojan host stormed forth to the battle field with shrill cries, like an army of cranes, but the Greeks approached with a calm and noble movement. There we see only the excess of blind force, here the triumph of form and the simple majesty of law.

Now a fairer necessity knits the sexes together, and sympathy of heart assists in preserving the alliance, which was only begun by the capricious and fickle moods of desire. Shape, released from its gloomy fetters, is recognised by the tranquil eye, soul looks into soul, and a generous interchange of inclination supplants a selfish traffic in pleasure. Desire enlarges and elevates itself to love, as humanity beams from its object; and a sordid advantage over sense is despised for a nobler triumph over will. The need of pleasing subjects the man of force to the mild jurisdiction of taste; he can make booty of pleasure, but love must be a gift. He can only strive to reach this loftier prize through form, and not through matter. He must cease to affect, as a force, the feeling, and as phenomenon, to oppose the intellect; if he would satisfy freedom, he must

concede it. As Beauty nullifies the conflict of nature in its simplest and purest example, in the eternal contrariety of sex, so also it nullifies it—or at least tends to do so—in the complicated whole of society, and to reconcile all the gentle and the violent in the moral world, according to the model of that free union which it forms between manly power and womanly tenderness. Weakness now becomes inviolate, and licentious strength is rebuked; the generosity of knightly manners ameliorates the right of nature. The graceful blush of modesty disarms the one whom no force can terrify, and tears quench a revenge which no blood could appease. Hatred itself regards the gentle appeal of honour, the sword of the conqueror spares a disarmed foe, and a hospitable hearth smokes for the stranger, on the dreaded shore where death was once his only welcome.

The æsthetic formative impulse establishes insensibly a third joyous empire of play and of show, between the formidable realm of powers and the sacred realm of law—an empire wherein it releases man from all the fetters of circumstance, and frees him, both physically and morally, from all that can be called constraint.

If man, in the *dynamical* state of right, meets man as a power, and circumscribes his operations, or opposes him in the *ethical* state of duty with the majesty of law, and fetters his will—he need only appear to him in the circle of polished intercourse, in the æsthetic state, as shape, only confront him as an object for the free play-impulse. *To give freedom by freedom* is the fundamental law of this empire.

The dynamical state can only make society possible, while restraining nature by nature; the ethical state can only make it (morally) necessary, while subjecting the single to the universal will; the æsthetic state alone can make it actual, since it fulfils the will of the whole through the nature of the individual. If need already impels man to society, and reason plants social principles within him, yet Beauty alone can impart to him a *social character*. Taste alone introduces harmony

into society, since it establishes harmony in the individual. All other representative forms mutilate man, since they are founded either exclusively upon the sensuous, or upon the spiritual part of his being; only the expression of Beauty makes a whole out of him, since thereto, both his natures must harmonize. All other forms of communication mutilate society, since they relate either exclusively to the private susceptibility, or to the dexterity of single members—consequently, to that which is distinctive between man and man; only the communication of Beauty can combine society, since it relates to that which is common to all. We enjoy the pleasures of sense only as individuals, without the participation of the generic nature which dwells within us; then we cannot extend to universality our sensuous pleasures, because we cannot make our individuality universal. We enjoy the pleasures of cognition only generically, and while carefully removing from our judgment every trace of the individual; then we cannot make our rational pleasures universal, because we cannot exclude, as from our own judgment, the traces of individuality in that of others. Beauty alone we enjoy at the same time as individual and as genus; that is, as representatives of the race. Sensuous good can only make one happy person, since it founds itself upon inclination, which is always accompanied by exclusion; and it can only make this one partially happy, because the personality does not participate. Absolute good can make happy only under conditions, which are not universally to be predicated; for truth is only the reward of denial, and only a pure heart believes in a pure will. Beauty alone blesses all the world, and every being forgets its limitations, while under her enchantment.

No pre-eminence, no absolute monarchy is tolerated, so far as taste governs, and the empire of beauty in show is diffused. This empire extends upwards to the place where reason rules with absolute necessity, abolishing all matter; and downwards where the native impulse controls with blind necessitation, and form is still in embryo; nay, taste itself still preserves its



executive power upon these distant confines, where its legislative power is taken away. Isolated desires must renounce their selfishness, and the agreeable, which otherwise only entices the senses, must also cast the toils of grace over the spirit. Duty, the stern voice of necessity, must alter its reproachful formula, which resistance alone can justify, and honour willing nature by a nobler confidence. Taste conducts knowledge from the mysteries of science forth beneath the open heaven of common sense, and converts the property of the schools into a common good for the whole human family. Even the loftiest genius must resign its particular elevation, and descend familiarly to the comprehension of a child. Power must submit while the Graces bind it, and the self-willed lion must obey the reins of Love. To this end it draws its favouring veil over physical need, which offends the dignity of a free spirit in its naked shape, and conceals from us the degrading relationship with matter, by a delicious illusion of freedom. Even mercenary art, borrowing its wings, lifts itself from the dust; and the fetters of corporeity, touched by its wand, drop from the inanimate as well as animate. In the æsthetic state, all, even the subserving tool, is a free citizen, possessing equal rights with the noblest; and the intellect, which forcibly moulds the passive mass to its designs, must consult with it concerning its destination. Here, then, in the empire of æsthetic show, is that ideal of equality fulfilled, which the enthusiast would so gladly see realized in actual life; and if it is true, that polite manners attain their earliest and most perfect maturity in the vicinity of the throne, we must also recognise here the benevolent dispensation, which often appears to restrict man in the actual, only to excite his development in the ideal—world.

But does such a state of beauty in show exist, and where is it to be found? In every finely-strung soul it exists as a necessity; but as a fact, one would find it, like the pure church and the pure republic, only in select circles, where the demeanour is formed, not by the lifeless imitation of foreign

manners, but by the intrinsic beauty of nature—where man passes through the most intricate circumstances with cool simplicity and tranquil innocence, and is neither compelled to insult another's freedom, in order to maintain his own, nor to manifest grace at the expense of dignity.



THE NECESSARY LIMITS  
IN THE USE OF  
BEAUTIFUL FORMS



## LIMITS OF TASTE.

THE abuse of Beauty, and the pretensions of the imagination to appropriate for itself the legislative, where it only possesses the executive—power, have been so detrimental both in life and in science, that it is of the utmost importance properly to define the limits, which are requisite to the use of beautiful forms. These limits are already embraced in the nature of Beauty, and we need only call to mind how taste exerts its influence, to be able to define *how far* it may extend it.

The operations of taste are generally undertaken, to bring into harmony, and to combine in an internal alliance, the sensuous and spiritual powers of man. Where then such an internal alliance between reason and sense has a legitimate design, an influence is to be allowed to taste. But suppose cases, where, either to accomplish a design, or to satisfy a duty, we must act as pure rational beings, free from all sensuous influence, and where then the alliance between spirit and matter must be for the time destroyed—there taste finds its limits, which it cannot transgress, without either frustrating a design, or removing us from our duty. But such cases actually occur, and they are already prescribed to us in our destiny.

Our destiny (*Bestimmung*) is, to acquire cognitions and to act from them. For both a dexterity is requisite, to exclude the sense from that which the spirit does, since perception must be abstracted from every cognition, and desire from every moral volition.

When we *cognize*, we are in a state of activity, and our attention is directed to an *object*, to a relation between separate modes. When we *perceive*, we are in a state of passivity, and our attention (so to call that, which is not a conscious operation of the spirit) is only directed to our condition, so far as that is affected by being receptive of an impression. As we can only perceive and not cognize Beauty, we remark in it no relation to other objects, and refer its mode (*Vorstellung*) not to other modes, but to our perceptive self. We experience nothing in a beautiful object, but *from* it we experience a change in our condition, of which perception is the expression. Then our knowledge is not extended by decisions of taste, and no cognition, not even of Beauty itself, is obtained by the perception of Beauty. Where then cognition is the aim, taste can be of no service to us—at least no direct and immediate service ; rather is cognition discontinued, just so long as we are occupied with Beauty.

But it will be objected, of what service then is an elegant investiture of ideas, if the intention of the exposition, which can be nothing else than to educe cognition, is rather thereby hindered than assisted ?

Certainly, beauty of investiture can promote intellectual conviction just as little as the elegant arrangement of a repast serves to satiate the guest, or the exterior polish of a man to decide his internal worth. But just as, on the one hand, the fine disposition of a table entices the appetite, and on the other, a recommendatory exterior generally awakes and excites attention to the man, so by an attractive exhibition of truth we are favourably inclined to open our soul to it ; and the hindrances in our disposition, which otherwise would have opposed the difficult prosecution of a long and rigorous chain of thought, are removed. The subject never gains by beauty of form, nor is the understanding assisted in its cognition by taste. The subject must recommend itself directly to the understanding through itself, while beauty of form addresses the imagination, and flatters it with a show of freedom.

But this innocent condescension towards the senses, which is only allowable in the *form*, without thereby changing the *subject* at all, is subjected to great restrictions, and can be completely destructive of design, according to the kind of cognition and the degree of conviction which one proposes in communicating his thoughts.

There is a *scientific* cognition, which rests upon positive ideas and recognised principles, and a *popular* cognition, which only depends upon feelings more or less developed. What is often very conducive to the latter, may be diametrically opposed to the former.

Where one seeks to effect a strict conviction from principles, it is not done by displaying truth only according to the *subject*, but the *proofs* of truth must also be contained with it, in the form of the exposition. But this means nothing else than that not only the subject, but also its statement, must be in conformity to the laws of thought. The conceptions must also be united in the exposition with the same rigid necessity with which they depend upon each other in the intellect, and stability in statement must correspond to stability in idea. But now that freedom, which is allowed to the imagination in cognitions, strives with the rigid necessity, according to which the intellect concatenates its judgments and conclusions. The imagination continually strives, in conformity with its nature, after intuitions—that is, after complete and universally definite representations, and is incessantly employed in exhibiting the universal in a single case, confining it to space and time, securing to the conception an individuality, and giving the abstract a corporeity. It likes *freedom*, too, in its combinations, and thus recognises no other law than the serial chance of space and time; for this is the only principle of coherency, which remains to us in our representations, if we reason away all that is conception, all that *internally* connects them. In a manner quite the reverse, the intellect is busied with *partial representations* or conceptions, and its endeavours tend to distinguish characteristics in the animate whole of an intuition.



Since the intellect unites things *according to the internal relations*, which can only be discovered by dissection, it can *combine* only so far as it previously *separated*—that is, only by partial representations. The intellect observes a rigid necessity and legality in its combinations, and it can only be satisfied by a permanent association of ideas. But this association will be destroyed, as often as the imagination inserts *entire* representations—(single cases) in this chain of abstractions, and mingles the serial chance of time with the rigid necessity of an actual connexion (in fact).\* Hence it is unavoidably necessary that the imagination should renounce its capricious character, where there is to be strict consequence of thought, and learn to subordinate and sacrifice its struggle after the greatest possible sensuousness in representations, and the greatest possible freedom in their combination, to the wants of the intellect. For this reason the exposition must be so managed as to crush that effort of the imagination, by excluding everything individual and sensuous, and as well to restrict its restless poetic impulse by definiteness in expression, as the advances of its caprice in combination by conformity to law. To be sure, it will not be subjected to this yoke without resistance, but we here reasonably reckon upon a self-denial and a serious resolution of the hearer or reader, not to regard, for the sake of the facts, the difficulties which are inseparable from form.

But where such a resolution can *not* be presupposed, and where we can indulge no hope, that interest in the subject will

\* An author who is engaged in strict scientific inquiries, will on that account make a reluctant and sparing use of *examples* (By-play, *Beispiel*). What obtains with perfect truth in the universal, is liable to qualifications in each particular case; and as circumstances occur in each particular case, which are contingent in respect to the genral idea it is meant to elucidate, it is always to be feared, that these contingent relations may become incorporated with that general idea, and deduct somewhat from its universality and necessity.

be sufficiently strong to encourage this exertion, there indeed we must refrain from the communication of a scientific cognition, but gain instead somewhat more freedom as to exposition. In this case we resign the form of science, which tasked the imagination too severely, and which can only be made tolerable through the importance of the aim, and we select instead the form of Beauty, which, independent of all subjects is its own recommendation. Since the facts will not protect the form, the form must disregard the facts.

Popular instruction is compatible with this freedom. As the demagogue or popular author (an appellation, under which I comprehend each one, who does not address exclusively the learned) speaks to a public not previously prepared, and does not select his reader like the other, but must take him as he finds him, he can only presuppose in him the universal conditions of thought, only the universal incentives to attention, but no peculiar *aptness* in reasoning, no acquaintance yet with definite conceptions, no interest in definite objects. Then too he cannot presume at hazard that the imagination of those whom he wishes to instruct, will combine the requisite meaning with his abstractions, and furnish a subject to the general conceptions, to which the scientific exposition is limited. In order to proceed more securely, he prefers to give at once both the intuitions and the single cases, to which those conceptions relate; and he leaves it to his reader's intellect, to fashion therefrom the conception extempore. Then the imagination will be brought into play much more by the popular exposition, but still only *reproductively* (renewing communicated representations), and not *productively* (demonstrating its self-creating power). Those single cases or intuitions are much too strictly estimated with reference to the present design, and much too accurately adjusted for the use that should be made of them, for the imagination ever to forget that it acts in the *service of the intellect*. It is true, the exposition keeps somewhat nearer to life and the world of sense, but is not yet lost in it. Then the statement still continues to be only *didactic*; for, in order to

be beautiful, it fails of the two most eminent qualities, *sensuousness in expression, and freedom in motion.*

The statement is *free*, when the intellect defines indeed with precision the consecution of ideas, but according to laws so hidden, that the imagination appears to act in a manner entirely capricious, and to follow only the serial chance of time. The statement is *sensuous*, if it conceals the universal in the particular, and resigns\* to the fancy the living image (the *entire* representation), where the only object is the conception (the *partial* representation). Then the sensuous representation, regarded from one point of view, is rich, since where only a determination is required, it affords a complete image, an entirety of determinations, an individual; but regarded from another point of view, it is again *limited* and *poor*, since it only maintains of one individual and of a single case, what is yet to be understood of a whole sphere. Thus it abridges the intellect exactly in proportion to the surplus it gives to the imagination, for the more complete a representation is in contents, the less is its extent.

It is the interest of the imagination, to change its objects arbitrarily; the interest of the intellect is to unite its own objects with rigid necessity. As much as both these interests appear to conflict, there is still a point of union between them, and to discover this, is the peculiar merit of beautiful style.

In order to satisfy the imagination, the discourse must have a material part or body, which is supplied by the intuitions, from which the intellect separates the single characteristics or conceptions; for, however abstractedly we may reflect, there is always at last something sensuous which lies at the bottom of our reflection. But only the imagination flies from intuition to intuition, unconstrained and irregularly, and obeys no other connexion than that of the succession of time. Then the intuitions which afford the material part to the discourse, stand in no *actual* connexion with each other, but appear rather to exist for themselves as independent members and as proper wholes; they betray the entire disorder of an imagination at

play, and on only conforming to itself, so that the attire has æsthetic freedom, and the want of fancy is satisfied. We might say that such an exposition is an *organic* product, where not only the whole lives, but the single members have also their proper existence; the merely scientific exposition is a *mechanical* work, where the members, in themselves lifeless, impart to the whole, by their intimate union, an artificial life.

On the other hand, in order to satisfy the intellect and educe cognition, the discourse must have a spiritual part, *significance*, and this it acquires through the conceptions, by whose means those intuitions are related to each other and united in a whole. Now, if between these conceptions, as the spiritual part of the discourse, the closest connexion exists, while their corresponding intuitions, as the sensuous part of the discourse, only appear to coexist by an arbitrary play of the fancy—the problem is solved, and the intellect is satisfied by conformity, while the fancy is flattered by non-conformity.

Let one seek to discover the magic of beautiful diction, and he will always find that it is contained in such a felicitous relation between external freedom and internal necessity. The *individualizing* of objects, and the figurative or *informal* expression, chiefly contribute to this freedom of imagination—the former by elevating the sensuousness, and the latter by creating it where it is not. While we represent a genus by an individual, and exhibit an universal idea in a single case, we take from fancy the fetters which the intellect had imposed upon it, and give it ample power to demonstrate itself creatively. Ever striving after completeness of determinations, it now obtains and uses the right to restore, to animate, to transform at pleasure, the image committed to it, and to accompany it in all its combinations and transformations. It may for a moment forget its subordinate part, and conduct itself like an arbitrary sovereign, since a sufficient security against it exists in the rigorous, internal connexion, so that it can never

entirely escape from the reins of—the intellect. The informal expression carries this freedom still further, while coupling together images, which are entirely diverse as to their contents, but which associate themselves together under a higher idea. Now since the fancy confines itself to the contents, the intellect, on the contrary, to that higher idea, the former makes a leap, where the intellect perceives the perfect stability. The ideas unfold according to the *law of necessity*, but pass over to the imagination according to the *law of freedom*; thought remains the same—only the medium of its exhibition is changed. Thus does the gifted author create the lordliest order out of anarchy itself, and erects a solid fabric upon an ever-vacillating foundation—on the ever-flowing stream of imagination.

If we institute a parallel between the scientific, the popular and the beautiful diction, it is apparent that all three deliver the idea to be embodied, with equal fidelity, materially, and thus all three assist us to a cognition, but in such a manner that the kind and degree of this cognition are with each one sensibly different. The æsthetic author presents us the data from which he proceeds rather as *possible* and *desirable*, than convincing us of their reality or even necessity; for his thought announces itself only as an arbitrary creation of the imagination, which, for itself alone, is never in a condition to warrant the reality of its representations. The popular author awakes in us the belief that a thing is *really* so, but he succeeds no further; for he makes the truth of that statement sensible to us, but not absolutely certain. Feeling indeed can teach what *is*, but never what *must be*. The philosophical author elevates that belief to conviction, for he proves, upon indubitable grounds, that a thing is *necessarily* so.

If we start from the previous principles, it will not be difficult to assign its suitable place to each of the three different forms of diction. Upon the whole, it may be regarded as a rule, that where not only the result is important, but the demonstration also, the scientific style deserves the preference, and

the popular and æsthetic style, where generally there is reference only to the result. But *when* the popular mode of expression may pass over to the *æsthetic*, is determined by the greater or less degree of interest, which is to be presupposed and created.

The pure scientific expression puts us (more or less, according as it is more philosophical or more popular) *in possession* of a cognition; the æsthetic expression *lends* us the same only for momentary enjoyment and use. The first gives us—if I may be allowed the comparison—the tree with its roots, but indeed we must wait patiently, till it blossoms and bears fruit; the æsthetic expression plucks for us only the blossoms and fruit, but the tree which bore them is not ours; and when they are enjoyed and have withered, our possessions vanish away. It would be just as absurd to present him, who just now only desires a fruit, with the tree itself and its fruits in prospect, as it would be to pull off only the flowers and fruit for him who would have the tree itself planted in his garden. The application is self-evident, and I will only remark, that the æsthetic expression is just as little suited to the chair of instruction, as the precise and scientific to refined conversation and the forum.

The disciple gathers for remote purposes and for a future use: hence the teacher must be careful to make him a *complete possessor of the knowledge*, which he transmits to him. But nothing is our own, except that which is transmitted to the intellect. The orator, on the contrary, designs a speedy use, and has an immediate need of satisfying his public. It is his interest then, to make the knowledge which he imparts *practical*, as quickly as possible, and he performs this in the safest way, when he commits it to the *sense* and qualifies it for the *perception*. The teacher, who accepts his public only upon conditions, and is authorized, in already presupposing that it has the mental disposition which is requisite for the reception of truth, only regards the *object* of his discourse; as on the contrary the orator, who need enter upon no condition with his public, and

must first gain over their inclination to his purpose, has to address himself at once to the *subjects* which he discusses. The former, whose public is the same, and regularly returns, need only deliver fragments, which form a whole when united with the preceding expositions; the latter, whose public changes constantly, and comes unprepared and perhaps never returns, must *complete* his business in every single delivery; each of his discourses must be a whole in itself, and contain its complete development.

Hence it is not strange, if a profoundly dogmatic discourse meets with no success in conversation and from the pulpit, and a spiritual æsthetic discourse bears no fruit in the chair of science—if the polite world leaves unread writings which form an epoch in the world of letters, and the scholar is ignorant of works which are a school for the polished, and are eagerly sought after by every admirer of Beauty. Each kind can command admiration in its own definite circle—nay, as to their internal capacity, both may be on a perfect equality; but it would smack of impossibility, if we desired that a work which tasked the thinker, should at the same time grace the leisure hour of the mere bel-esprit.

Upon these grounds I consider it blameworthy, if works are selected for the education of youth, in which scientific matters are invested with an æsthetic form. I speak here by no means of those works, where the subject has been *sacrificed* to the form, but of really excellent works, whose facts abide a most rigorous proof, but do not include this proof in their form. It is true, one accomplishes with such works the design of being read, but always at the expense of the more important design, to what use are they read. By such reading the intellect is always exercised only in its harmony with the imagination, and thus never learns to distinguish the form from the subject matter, and to act as a pure faculty. And yet the mere exercise of the intellect is an important crisis in the education of the young, and in most cases, consists more in the thinking

than in the thought. If we would have an employment well-conducted, we take care to announce it as a sport. But the spirit should rather be already braced to action by the form of treatment, and must be thrust forward with a certain violence from passivity to activity. The teacher should by no means conceal from his scholar the rigorous conformity of method, but rather present it to his attention, and where possible, make it an object of his desire. The student should learn to prosecute a design, and be content too with disagreeable means for the sake of the design. He should early strive after that nobler pleasure which is the reward of exertion. The senses are entirely rebuffed by a scientific exposition, but an æsthetic one excites their interest. What will be the result? We devour with sympathy such a work, such a conversation—but we are hardly in a condition to render a proper account, when asked for the results. And very naturally—for the conceptions press into the soul by whole masses, but the intellect can cognize only where it divides; the mind is rather passively than actively disposed during the reading, but the spirit possesses nothing but what results from its own action.

Finally, this holds good only of Beauty of a common kind, and of the perception of such Beauty. The true Beauty is based upon the most rigorous definiteness, upon the strictest separation, upon the highest internal necessity; only this definiteness must wait to be found, rather than forcibly intrude itself. The highest conformity must exist there, but it must appear as nature. Such a product will fully satisfy the intellect as soon as it is studied—but exactly because it is truly beautiful, it does not intrude its conformity, nor address itself to the intellect *in particular*, but it speaks as pure unity to the harmonizing whole of man—as nature to nature. A common critic perhaps finds it vague, meagre, far too little defined; that very thing in which the triumph of the exposition consists—the perfect dissolution of parts into a simple whole, displeases him, because he is only skilled in discriminating, and only has an eye for the single. To be sure, the discriminat-



ing power of the intellect should be satisfied in philosophical expositions, single results should obtain for it throughout; this is the design which can by no means be overlooked. But if the author has so provided, by a rigorous internal definiteness, that the intellect must necessarily find these results, as soon as it applies itself in that direction, yet if not content with that alone, and constrained by his nature (which always works as an harmonious unity, and quickly restores again this unity, where it has been lost in the operation of abstraction), he again combines the dismembered, and through the united demands of the spiritual and sensuous power, always claims the whole man—then indeed, far from writing according to an indifferent standard, he has nearly approached the highest. Certainly the common critic, who, without an eye for this harmony, continually strives only for the partial, who, in St. Peter's Church itself would only examine the pillars which support that artificial firmament, will be little obliged to him for creating for him a twofold labour; for such a one must forsooth first *translate* the author, if he would understand him; just as the mere naked intellect, deprived of all faculty of exposition, must first transpose and lay apart in its delivery the beautiful and harmonious in nature as well as in art—in short, like the school-boy, must first learn to spell, in order to read. But the exhibitory author is never restricted by the narrowness and poverty of his reader. He moves towards the ideal which he bears within, unconcerned, who follows him or who loiters. Many will remain behind; for, however rare it is only to find even thinking readers, it is infinitely more rare, to meet with those who can set forth their thought (*darstellen und denken können*). Then such an author will, in the nature of things, fall out as well with those who only contemplate and perceive—for he imposes upon them the distasteful toil of thought—as with those, who only think, since he demands what for them is absolutely impossible—the exercise of a creative faculty. But as both are only very incomplete representatives of common and genuine humanity, which calls for an entire harmony of both those occupations,

their contradiction signifies nothing; their judgments rather assure the author that he has gained the object of his search. The abstract thinker finds his subject well meditated, and the contemplative reader finds his style lively; both approve then what they comprehend, and only miss what surpasses their ability.

But, on these very grounds, such an author is entirely incompetent to acquaint the unlearned with the object, of which he treats—or, in the most peculiar sense of the word, *to teach*. Luckily he is not compelled to this, since there is no dearth of subjects for the instruction of the learned. The teacher, strictly so called, must accomodate himself to the present exigency; he goes upon the supposition of incapacity; as, on the contrary, the author demands from his reader or hearer a certain integrity and cultivation. Hence he does not confine his action to the mere communication of lifeless conceptions; he embraces the animate with lively energy, and takes possession of the whole man, his intellect, his feeling, and his will.

If it is found injurious to the stability of knowledge, to give room to the demands of taste in the process of learning, it is therefore by no means affirmed, that the cultivation of this faculty would be premature in the scholar. Quite the reverse; we should animate and prompt him, to communicate, by means of lively representation, those sciences which he has made his own by means of study. If the latter has only been regarded, the former can have none other than useful results. One must certainly be master of a truth in a high degree, to be able to forsake, without danger, the form in which it had been found; one must possess a great intellect, in order not to lose his object in the free play of the imagination. Whoever imparts to me his knowledge in a scientific form, convinces me indeed, that he properly comprehends, and knows how to maintain it; but he who is prepared at the same time to communicate it in an æsthetic form, not only proves that he is competent to dispense it, but also that he has taken it up into his own nature, and is capable of representing it in his actions. There is no

other path for the results of thought to the will and into the life, but through the self-active formative power. Nothing but what is already a living fact *within us*, can become so *without us*, and it is with creations of the spirit as with organic formations—the blossom always precedes the fruit.

If we consider, how many truths are active as internal intuitions, a long time before philosophy demonstrates them, and how often the best demonstrated truths continue powerless for the feeling and will, we shall perceive, how important it is for practical life, to pursue this hint of nature, and to convert scientific cognitions again into active intuitions. In this way only is one prepared to participate in those treasures of wisdom, which are forbidden by their constitution to take the unnatural path of science. In respect to cognition, Beauty here performs that, which in respect to the mode of action, it performs in the moral world; it brings men together in the results and the material, who would never have united in the form and the subject-matter.

The softer sex cannot, and need not, in conformity to its nature and aesthetic determinateness, participate with the ruder in *science*, but, through the medium of representation, it can do so in *truth*. Man is still well satisfied, that his taste should be offended, if the intellect is only compensated by the internal capacity of a subject. He is commonly only the more pleased, the more severely the definiteness is brought out, and the more completely the internal quality is separated from the empirical mode. But woman does not resign the most neglected form for the richest subject; and the whole interior structure of her being justifies the severe demand. This sex, which, even if it did not govern by Beauty, must at any rate be called the fair sex, because Beauty governs it, carries everything that presents itself, before the tribunal of perception, and totally rejects whatever does not commend itself to that, or offends it. Indeed, the truth itself which is inseparable from its proof, cannot be transmitted to the sex through this channel,

but only the material of truth. But fortunately they only require the material of truth, in order to attain their highest perfection, and the exceptions that have hitherto appeared, cannot excite the wish that they might become the rule.

Then man must undertake the occupation as twofold, which nature not only remits, but also forbids to the other sex, if he would meet woman on an equal footing in this important point of existence. He will then seek, as much as possible, to move out of the realm of abstraction where he reigns, into that of imagination and perception, where woman is both the model and arbitress. As he can establish no enduring growth in the feminine spirit, he will seek to produce as many flowers and fruits as possible, in his own field, in order the oftener to renew the soon exhausted supply in the other, and to be able to sustain an artificial harvest where no natural one comes to maturity. Taste improves—or conceals—the native spiritual distinctions of both sexes; it nourishes and adorns the feminine with the products of the masculine spirit, and allows the fair sex to perceive, where it has never thought, and enjoy, where it has never laboured.

Then it is true that form in communicating knowledge is entrusted to taste, under the restrictions which I have previously mentioned—but with the express condition that it does not meddle with the subject. It should never forget, that it executes a foreign commission, and is not employed with its own business. Its entire instrumentality should be confined to giving the mind an inclination favourable for cognition; but it should positively assume no authority in all that concerns the subject-matter.

If it does the latter—if it makes supreme *its own* law, which is no other than to please the imagination and satisfy observation—if it applies this law not only to the *method*, but also to the *matier*, and not only arranges, but also selects the materials in conformity to itself, it both exceeds as well as violates its commission, and corrupts the object which it ought honestly to transmit to us. It is now no longer asked, what the things

*are*, but how they may be best recommended to the senses. The rigid consequence of thought, which should only have been concealed, is cast aside as a burdensome restraint; perfection is sacrificed to grace—the truth of parts to the Beauty of the whole—the internal quality to the external impression. But where the subject must accommodate itself to the form, there, in fact, is no subject; the exposition is vivid, and man, instead of augmenting his science, has only pursued an entertaining sport.

Writers, who possess more wit than intellect, and more taste than science, subject themselves too often to the imputation of this deception; and readers who are more accustomed to perceive than to reflect, show themselves but too ready to pardon it. It is generally a hazardous experiment, to form the taste completely, before one has exercised the intellect as a pure reflective power, and enriched his head with ideas. For since taste regards continually only the method and not the matter, all actual distinction of things is lost just where it is the sole judge. One becomes indifferent to reality, and finally attributes all value to the form and the appearance.

Hence the shallow and frivolous spirit, which we see very often to predominate in such ranks and circles, as in other respects boast not unjustly of the highest refinement. It must unavoidably be pernicious to a young man, to introduce him into this circle of the graces, before the Muses have declared him competent; and that which gives the exterior polish to the mature youth,\* hardly fails to make a fool of the immature.\*

\* H. Garve, in his sagacious parallel of *gentle and simple manners*, in the first part of his *Essays*, &c. (a book, concerning which I may premise, that it should be in the hands of every one), has enumerated, among the prerogatives of a noble youth, his precocious qualification for intercourse with the great world, from which the commoner is excluded by his birth. But H. Garve has not expressed an opinion on the point whether this privilege, which undoubtedly is to be considered advantageous, as regards the

Substance without form is indeed only a half possession, for the noblest sciences lie buried, like dead treasures, in a head which is unable to give them any shape. On the contrary, form without substance is only the shadow of a possession, and all possible dexterity in expression can avail him nothing, who has nothing to express.

If then æsthetic culture would not conduct in this by-path, taste must only define the external shape, but reason and experience, the internal quality. If the sensuous impression is made chief judge, and things relate only to perception, man never emerges from the bondage of matter, and it never becomes light within his spirit—in short, just as he concedes *too much* to the imagination, just so much does he lose in the freedom of his reason.

The Beautiful operates through mere observation, the True will have study. Whoever, then, merely exercises his sense of Beauty, contents himself where study is absolutely necessary, with superficial observation, and will only sport cleverly, where grave exertion is demanded. Nothing is ever gained by mere observation. Whoever will perform anything great, must penetrate deeply, discriminate accurately, combine in manifold ways, and remain steadfast. Even the artist and the poet, although both labour only for the satisfaction arising from observation, can succeed in making their works acceptable to

exterior and æsthetic formation of a young noble, can also be called a gain, in respect to his internal formation, and thus to the whole of his culture; and I doubt whether he would be able to justify such an assertion. As much too as is gained in this way for form, so much must consequently be lost in matter; and when we reflect, how much easier form adapts itself to a subject, than subject to a form, the commoner need not be envious of the noble's prerogative. If indeed the same arrangement must obtain henceforward, that the commoner *labours*, and the nobleman *represents*, no better means could be chosen for effecting it, than this very difference in culture; but I doubt, whether the nobleman will be *always* content with such a division.

us in the sense of play, only by a strenuous and nothing less than attractive study.

This appears to me to be the infallible test, by which we may distinguish the mere dilettante from the genuine artistic genius. The seductive charm of the great and the beautiful, the fire with which it enkindles the youthful imagination, and the appearance of facility with which it deceives the senses, have already persuaded many an inexperienced one to seize the palette or the lyre, and to pour out whatever within him would become living, in shapes or tones. Dark ideas labour like a becoming world in his head, and lead him to believe that he is inspired. He mistakes the dark for the profound, the savage for the powerful, the indefinite for the infinite, the senseless for the supersensuous—and how does he not plume himself at its birth! But the judgment of the connoisseur will not allow this testimony of ardent self-love. With obdurate criticism he destroys the legerdmain of the heated imagination, and sheds a light down the deep shaft of science and experience, where, concealed from the unconsecrated, bubbles up the fountain of all true Beauty. If genuine genius slumbers in the interrogating youth, at first, indeed, his modesty will prove a stumbling-block, but the courage of true talent will soon animate him to endeavour. If nature has designed him for a creative artist, he studies the human structure beneath the knife of the *anatomist*, enters the *profoundest depths in order to be true upon the surface*, and investigates the whole genus in order to prove his right to the individual. If he is born to be a poet, he watches the humanity in his own breast, in order to comprehend its infinitely changing play upon the wide theatre of the world; he subjects luxuriant fancy to the discipline of taste, and suffers the sober intellect to survey the banks, between which the stream of inspiration is to leap and sparkle. He is well aware that the great increases only from unseemly trifles, and he rears grain for grain, the wondrous fabric whose single impression now makes us giddy. But if, on the contrary, nature has *or'z* stamped him for a dilettante, difficulty cools his lifeless zeal, and he either deserts, if he is

modest, a path which self-deception pointed out; or, if he is not, he diminishes the great ideal to the little diameter of his own capacity, since he is not in a condition to enlarge his capacity to the noble proportions of the ideal. The genuine artistic genius, then, is ever to be recognised in this, that in the most glowing feeling for totality, it preserves coldness and enduring patience for the partial, and rather sacrifices the delight of consummation, lest it should mar perfection. The labouriousness of the means disgusts the mere amateur with the end, and he would fain remain at ease in production as in observation.

Hitherto we have spoken of the disadvantages which arise from an overweening susceptibility to the beautiful in form, and from too extensive æsthetic demands for reflection and judgment. But the pretensions of taste have a far greater meaning, if they have the *Will* for their object; for it is something entirely different, whether the immoderate propensity for the beautiful hinders the extension of our knowledge, or whether it vitiates the character, and causes us to neglect our duty. Literary capriciousness in reflection is certainly something injurious, and must obscure the intellect; but this same capriciousness, applied to the maxims of the Will, is something *criminal*, and must inevitably deprave the heart. And æsthetic refinement renders man prone to this dangerous extreme, as he commits himself, *exclusively* to the feeling of Beauty, and makes taste the unrestrained legislator for his Will.

The moral determinateness of man demands a complete independence of the Will from every influence of sensuous impulses; and taste, as we know, labours unceasingly, to strengthen the alliance between reason and sense. It is true, it thus succeeds in ennobling the desires, and bringing them into greater harmony with the demands of reason; but from this very success great danger may finally result for morality.

From the fact, that in man æsthetically improved, ~~the~~ *the* imagination in its freest play directs itself according to law, and



that the sense is pleased not without enjoying definiteness of the reason, it follows that the reciprocal service is demanded of the reason, to *direct itself in the gravity of its legislation according to the interest of the imagination*, and not to govern the Will without determinateness of the sensuous impulse. The moral obligation of the Will, which is valid entirely without condition, is imperceptibly regarded as a contract, which is binding upon one part so long only as the other observes it. The *accidental* agreement of duty with inclination is finally established as a *necessary* condition, and thus the source of morality is poisoned.

How the character falls by degrees into this corruption, may be made intelligible in the following manner.

So long as man is a savage, and his impulses only meet material objects, and an egoism of the lower kind conducts his actions, sensuousness can only be dangerous to morality through its *blind strength*, and can oppose the prescriptions of reason merely as a force. The voice of justice, moderation, humanity, is drowned in the tumult of desires. He is terrible in his revenge, since he is fearfully sensible to an injury. He robs and murders, since his appetites are too powerful for the weak restraints of reason. He is a furious beast towards others, since the native impulse still bestially sways himself.

But if he exchanges this savage state of nature for the condition of refinement, if taste ennobles his impulses, directs them to worthier objects in the moral world, and tempers their rude sallies by the rule of Beauty, it may happen that those impulses which before were only fearful through their *blind violence*, become far more dangerous to morality of character, through an appearance of *dignity* and an *assumed authority*, and exercise a far worse tyranny over the savage beneath the mask of innocence, nobleness, and purity.

The man of taste readily extricates himself from the uncouth yoke of instinct. He subdues his impulse according to the pleasure of the reason, and is sensible enough to leave the objects of his desires to be defined by the reflective spirit.

The oftener the case occurs, that the moral and æsthetic judgment, the feeling of morals and of Beauty, coincide in the same object and meet in the same decision, the more will the reason be inclined to consider an instinct so highly *spiritualized* as one of *its own*, and finally resign to it with unlimited authority the helm of the Will.

So long as a possibility exists that inclination and duty may coincide in the same object of desire, this *representation* of the moral feeling by the feeling of Beauty can be productive of no positive harm, although, strictly considered, nothing is gained thereby for the morality of single actions. But the case is materially altered, if the interest of perception and of reason is diverse—if duty demands conduct which is repugnant to taste, or if the latter perceives itself attracted to an object, which the reason, as moral arbitress, is forced to reject.

At this point necessity at once interferes, to separate the claims of the moral and æsthetic sense, which so long a conjunction blended almost inextricably, to define their mutual privileges, and to discover the true organ of power in the mind. But such an uninterrupted representation has induced a forgetfulness of it, and the long custom of immediately obeying the suggestions of taste, and of profiting thereby, must gradually have acquired for it a show of right. From the *uprightness* with which the taste has exercised its control over the Will, one could not fail to concede a certain *respect* for its claims, and it is this very respect of which inclination now takes advantage, with captious logic, at the expense of conscientious duty.

Respect is a feeling which can only be entertained for law, and what is in accordance with it. Whatever can demand respect, lays claim to absolute homage. The elevated inclination which has known how to obtain a surreptitious respect, will then be no more *subordinate* to, but *co-ordinate* with, the reason. It will pass for no treacherous subject, who rebels against his sovereign; it will be regarded as a majesty, and, like peer with peer, act with the reason as moral lawgiver. Then,



as it pretends, the balance is equal according to Right; and how much is it not to be feared lest Interest may turn the scale!

Of all the inclinations which spring from the feeling of Beauty and are the property of cultivated souls, none recommends itself so highly to the moral feeling as the elevated passion of Love, and none is more fruitful in sentiments, which suit the true dignity of man. To what heights does she not bear human nature, and what divine sparks can she not often elicit from common souls! Each selfish inclination is consumed by its holy fire, and principles themselves can hardly preserve the purity of the mind more faithfully, than love watches the nobleness of the heart. Often, while those are still struggling, love has already conquered for them, and by its all-powerful energy accelerated resolutions, which mere duty would have in vain demanded of weak humanity. Who could well distrust a passion, which so powerfully protects all that is excellent in human nature, and so triumphantly withstands egoism, the sworn foe of all morality?

But one would hardly trust the guidance of this conductor, unless already secured from danger by a better. The case might occur, when the beloved object is unhappy—unhappy on our own account, when it depends upon us to make him happy by the sacrifice of some moral scruples. “Should we allow him to suffer, for the sake of preserving a pure conscience? Does a disinterested, magnanimous passion allow this—a passion forgetting itself in, and resigning everything to, its object? It is true, it runs counter to our conscience, to make use of immoral means for the purpose of aiding him—but do we call that *loving*, when we still think of ourselves in the grief of a beloved one? Are we not more anxious for ourselves than for the object of our love, since we would rather see him unhappy, than be so ourselves through the reproaches of conscience?” With such sophistry can this passion undervalue the moral voice within us, as a *prompting of self-love*, if it opposes its interests, and represent our moral dignity as an *element in our happiness*, which we are at liberty to alienate. If our charac-

ter is not safely established by good principles, we shall act dishonourably with all the soaring of an exalted imagination, and shall think to have acquired a glorious victory over our self-love, when, exactly the reverse, we are its miserable victim. In the well-known French romance, *Liaisons dangereuses*, we find a very striking example of this deception, which the love of an otherwise pure and beautiful spirit practises. An unguarded moment surprises the Presidentess De Tourvel, and then she seeks to quiet her afflicted heart, by the thought that she has sacrificed her virtue to generosity.

The so-called imperfect duties are those especially which the feeling of Beauty protects, and not seldom maintains against the perfect. As they defer far more to the caprice of the subject, and at the same time reflect a glow of meritoriousness, they recommend themselves to the taste more unduly than the perfect duties, which govern absolutely with stern necessitation. How many men allow themselves to be unjust, for the sake of being generous! How many are there not, who violate the integrity of duty, in order to perform a single action well, and inversely; who sooner pardon an untruth than an indelicacy, sooner a violation of humanity than of honour—who destroy their bodies in order to hasten the perfection of their spirits, and debase their character to adorn their intellect! How many are there not, who are not appalled at depravity, if a praiseworthy end is to be attained, *who pursue an ideal of political happiness through all the horrors of anarchy, trample laws in the dust to make way for better, and scruple not to devote the present generation to misery, in order to secure thereby the happiness of the next!* The apparent disinterestedness of certain virtues gives them an air of purity, which sufficiently emboldens them to defiance in the very face of duty; and the fancy of many a one deceives him with the singular desire to be superior to morality and more rational than reason.

The man of refined taste is, in this particular, susceptible to a moral depravity, from which the rude child of nature, by

his very rudeness, is secured. With the latter, the difference between that which the sense requires and that which duty demands, is so marked and apparent, and his desires partake so little of the spiritual, that even if they still *govern* him, however despotically, they cannot acquire any *consideration* in his eyes. Then if overweening sensuousness incites him to an unjust action, he may indeed succumb to the temptation, but he cannot conceal from himself that he *errs*, and so he does homage to reason at the very moment when he acts in opposition to its prescriptions. On the contrary, the refined disciple of art will not confess that he sins, and prefers to *deny* it, in order to pacify his conscience. He would fain yield to desire, it is true, but without thereby sinking in his own esteem. Now how does he effect this? He first destroys the higher authority, which withstands his inclination—and before he transgresses the law, he brings into disrepute the competency of the lawgiver. Would it be believed that a depraved will could so pervert the intellect? All dignity to which an inclination can lay claim, is only owing to its connexion with the reason, and it is now both blinded and bold enough to arrogate this dignity even in its contest with the reason—nay, to make use of it even against the authority of the reason.

So dangerous may it prove for morality of character, if a too intimate communion reigns between the sensuous and moral impulses, which can be completely united only in the ideal, and never in reality. It is true, sensuousness hazards nothing by this connexion, as it possesses nothing which it must not resign when duty calls, and the reason demands the sacrifice. But so much more is hazarded with the reason, as moral lawgiver, if it allows the inclination to *present* it with what it might *demand* from it; for then the feeling of *obligation* is easily lost under the show of *voluntariness*, and a gift is denied, if the sensuousness should ever find its performance irksome. Then it is far safer for morality of character, if the representation of the moral feeling by the feeling of Beauty is, at least for a moment,

abolished—if the reason frequently governs *directly*, and reveals to the Will its true sovereign.

It may here be justly said, that genuine morality is preserved only in the school of adversity, and a state of continuous prosperity may easily prove a quicksand to virtue. I call him fortunate, who, in order to enjoy, is not compelled to do unjustly, and in order to act justly, is not compelled to abstain. The uninterruptedly prosperous man never then sees duty face to face, since his lawful and well-regulated inclinations always *anticipate* the injunctions of reason, and no temptation to an infraction of law brings the law to his remembrance. Only governed by the sense of Beauty, the vicegerent of reason in the world of sense, he will descend to his grave, without perceiving the dignity of his destiny. The unfortunate man, on the contrary, if he is at the same time a virtuous man, enjoys the noble privilege of communing *directly* with the divine majesty of law, and while yet a man, of evincing the freedom of a spirit, as *his own* virtue is dependent upon no inclination.



UPON  
THE MORAL USE  
OF  
ÆSTHETIC MANNERS.





## ÆSTHETIC MANNERS.

THE author of the treatise *Upon the Danger of Æsthetic Manners*,\* has with justice suspected a morality, which is founded only upon the feeling of Beauty, and has no other guarantee than Taste. But still, a pure and lively feeling for Beauty evidently has the most salutary influence upon the moral life: which point I will now discuss.

If I ascribe to Taste the merit of contributing to the advance of Morality, I do not mean that the sympathy which a good Taste takes in an action, can make that action a moral one. Morality need have no other ground than itself. Taste can *favour* moral conduct, as I hope to prove in the present essay, but its influence can never *create* that which is moral.

The case is the same with an internal and moral Freedom, as with that which is external and *physical*: I act freely in the latter sense, only when I obey my Will alone, independent of every foreign influence. But after all, I may be indebted for the possibility to follow my Will unconstrained, to a cause distinct from myself, as soon as it is understood that the latter can restrict my will. Just so may I finally owe the possibility to act well, to a cause distinct from my reason, as soon as that cause is considered as a force which may restrict my

\* The Treatise here alluded to was inserted by the author among his prose writings, under the title of the preceding essay, of which it is a part. It was first published separately in the *Horen*: 1795.

mental freedom. It may then be said with equal propriety, that a man can *receive* freedom from another, although freedom itself consists in his being exempt from accommodating himself to others; and that Taste may subserve virtue, although it is the essence of virtue to exist independently of foreign aid.

An action by no means ceases to be free, because that which might restrict it fortunately remains inactive, if we only know that the actor followed his own Will, without regard to a foreign one. In like manner, morality may still be predicated of an internal action, although the temptations which might have vitiated it are fortunately wanting, if we only perceive that the actor followed the prescriptions of his reason, to the exclusion of foreign motives. The freedom of an external action depends only upon its *immediate origination from the Will of the person*: the morality of an internal action only *upon the immediate definition of the Will by the law of reason*.

It may be easier or harder for us to act as free men, according as we impinge upon forces, which impose our freedom and require to be subdued. So far there are degrees of Freedom. Our freedom is greater, at least more apparent, if we maintain it against the most violent opposition of hostile forces; but still it does not cease, if our Will finds no opposition, or if a foreign power interferes and annihilates this opposition without our co-operation.

Just so is it with Morality. It may cost us more or less of a struggle to obey the reason directly, according as impulses stir within us which conflict with its demands, and which we must abjure. So far there are degrees of Morality. Our morality is greater, at least more salient, if we directly obey the reason, notwithstanding impulses however great; but still it does not cease, if we find no enticement to do the contrary, or if something, which is not our power of will, weakens this enticement. Enough, that we do well morally, when we do so only because it is moral, and without first asking ourselves whether it is likewise agreeable — even if we suppose a proba-

bility to exist that we might do otherwise, if it gave us pain or abridged our enjoyment.

To the honour of human nature be it admitted, that no man can sink so low as to prefer the bad, only because it is bad; but that every one without distinction would prefer the good because it is good, if it did not contingently exclude the agreeable, or include the disagreeable. All immorality in actual life appears, then, to result from the collision of the good with the agreeable, or, what is the same thing, of the desires with the reason—and to have its source, on the one hand, in the *strength* of sensuous impulses, on the other hand, in the weakness of the moral volition.

Then Morality can not only be hindered, but also promoted, in a twofold manner. Either the party of the reason and the power of moral volition must be strengthened, so that no temptation can overmatch it—or the force of temptation must be broken, that the weaker reason and the weaker moral volition may yet be superior to it.

It might indeed appear as if morality itself would gain nothing by the latter operation, since no change obtains thereby in the volition, upon the quality of which alone depends the morality of an action. But that change is by no means necessary in the admitted case, where we do not suppose an evil will, which must be changed, but only a good one, which is weak. And this weak moral will attains, in the way mentioned, to activity, which perhaps would not take place, if stronger impulses counterworked it. But morality really exists where a good will is the ground of an action. I do not hesitate, then, to lay down the principle, that that truly advances morality, which destroys the opposition between inclination and goodness.

The natural internal foe of Morality is the sensuous impulse, which, as soon as an object is presented, strives after satisfaction, and opposes the prescriptions of the reason, as soon as it finds them inconvenient. This sensuous impulse is incessantly

employed in drawing over to its interest the Will, which still remains under moral laws, and has upon it the obligation, ever to be in contradiction to the demands of the reason.

But the sensuous impulse requires no moral law, and will have its object realized through the Will, whatever the reason may say thereto. This tendency of our appetitive power, to rule the will directly and regardless of a higher law, conflicts with our moral determinateness, and is the strongest rival that man must oppose in his moral action. Desire legislates directly for rude dispositions, who are deficient both in moral and æsthetic culture; and they act only according to the pleasure of the senses. The reason legislates directly for moral dispositions, though deficient in æsthetic culture; and they overcome temptation only through a regard for duty. In spirits that possess æsthetic refinement, there is another court (*resort—Instanz*), which not seldom compensates for virtue, where that is deficient, and assists it where it exists. This court is Taste.

Taste demands moderation and decency: it abhors everything that is hard, angular, violent, and inclines to all that unites with ease and harmony. A correct *ton*, which is nothing else than an æsthetic law, makes a well-recognised demand of every civilized man, that he should listen to the voice of reason even in the storm of emotion, and set bounds to the rude outbreaks of nature. This constraint which the civilized man imposes upon himself in the expression of his feelings, secures to him a measure of dominion over those passions; at least, it acquires for him a facility in interrupting his condition of mere passivity by an exertion of self-activity, and in restraining the rash transition of feeling into action, by reflection. It is true, everything which breaks the blind violence of passion, evolves as yet no virtue (for that must always be its own work), but it affords space to the Will, to apply itself to virtue. But this victory of taste over rude passion is by no means a moral action, neither is the freedom, which taste gains here for the Will, a moral freedom. Taste liberates the mind from the yoke of instinct only so far as it substitutes its own fetters; and

while it disarms the first and the open foe of moral freedom, it not seldom remains as the second foe, and all the more dangerous under the guise of friendship. That is to say, Taste governs the mind only by the lure of satisfaction—a noble satisfaction, to be sure, since the reason is its source—but no morality exists where satisfaction determines the Will.

Still something of magnitude has been gained by this interference of taste in the operations of the Will. All those material inclinations and rude desires, which so often oppose themselves obstinately and stormfully to the practice of goodness, have been outlawed from the mind by Taste, and in their stead nobler and milder inclinations engrafted, which relate to order, harmony and perfection : and although these are no virtues, yet they share *one* object with virtue. If now desire speaks, it must endure a severe scrutiny from the sense of Beauty : and if now the reason speaks and enjoins actions of order, harmony and perfection, it finds not only no opposition from the side of inclination, but rather the liveliest concurrence. If, then, we survey the different forms in which morality may be expressed, we can refer them all to these two. Either sensuousness makes the move in the mind, that something should or should *not* take place, and the will takes action thereupon, according to the law of reason—or the reason makes the move, and the Will obeys it, without making inquiry of the senses.

The Grecian princess, Anna Comnena, tells us of a captured rebel, whom her father, Alexius, while he was one of his predecessor's generals, was commissioned to escort to Constantinople. On the way, as both are riding together alone, Alexius desires to make a halt under the shadow of a tree, to recover from the heat of the sun. Sleep soon overpowered him : but the other, troubled by the fear of expected death, remained awake. While Alexius is lying in a deep slumber, the rebel perceives his sword which was swung over a branch, and is tempted to gain his freedom by the murder of his keeper. Anna Comnena gives us to understand that she does not know what would have happened, if her father had not luckily

awaked. Now here was a moral case of the first kind, where the sensuous impulse had the first voice, before the reason pronounced sentence upon it as arbiter. Had the former overcome the temptation out of pure regard for rectitude, there would be no doubt that it had acted morally.

When the Duke Leopold von Braunschweig, of illustrious memory, deliberated on the banks of the swollen Oder, whether he should trust himself to the impetuous stream at the peril of his life, in order to rescue some unfortunates who were helpless without him—and when he, I suppose this case, entirely from a consciousness of duty—sprang into the skiff which no one else was willing to enter—none can deny that he acted morally. The Duke was here in a situation the reverse of the former one. Here the representation of duty preceded, and then the instinct of self-preservation excited, an opposition to the prescription of the reason. But in both cases, the will conducted in the same manner, obeying the reason directly: consequently both are moral.

\* But would both cases remain so still, if we allowed Taste to exert an influence?

Suppose, then, that the first, who is tempted to commit a bad action, and forbears out of regard to rectitude, has a taste so cultivated, that everything infamous and violent excites an abhorrence which nothing can overcome: his pure æsthetic sense will reject anything infamous, the moment that the instinct for preservation urges it—then it will not come before the moral bar, before the conscience, but be already decided in a previous court. But the æsthetic sense governs the Will by feelings only, and not by laws. That man, then, renounces the agreeable feeling of life, preserved, because he cannot bear the disagreeable one of having perpetrated a crime. The whole matter is thus decided in the court of feeling, and the man's conduct, however legal it is, is morally indifferent, and nothing but a beautiful operation of nature.

Suppose now, that the other, whose reason prescribes something to be done, against which a natural instinct rebels, has

an equally delicate sense of Beauty, charmed by all that is great and perfect: the moment that the reason makes its demand, the sensuousness will pass over to it, and he will do that *with* inclination, which, without that fine sensibility to Beauty, he would be compelled to do *against* inclination. But shall we, on this account, esteem him less perfect? Certainly not, for he acts originally out of pure regard for the prescription of reason: and that he obeys this prescription gladly, does not diminish the moral purity of his deed. Then *morally* he is just as perfect, but *physically* he is far more perfect: for he is a much more appropriate subject for virtue.

Then Taste gives the mind a tendency appropriate for virtue, as it removes all those inclinations which hinder the latter, and excites those which are favourable. Taste cannot be detrimental to true virtue, if, in all the cases where native impulse makes the first move, it tries at once and dismisses from its bar that upon which the conscience must otherwise pronounce sentence—thus being the reason, that among the actions of those who are governed by it, many more are found to be indifferent, than truly moral. For human excellence by no means depends upon the greater sum of *single, rigorously moral, actions*, but upon the greater congruence of the whole native disposition with the moral law; and it is a small recommendation to an age or a people, if we hear much among them concerning morality and single moral deeds: rather may we hope that in the climax of culture, if such a thing can be imagined, there will be little *talk* about it. On the other hand. Taste can avail true virtue, *positively*, in all the cases where the reason makes the first move, and is in danger of being outvoted by the stronger force of the native impulses. For, in this case, it reconciles our sensuousness with the interest of duty, and thus makes a meagre degree of moral volition adequate to the practice of virtue.

Now if Taste, as such, injures true morality in no case, but rather openly assists it in many, the circumstance that it promotes in the highest degree the *legality* of our conduct, must



possess great weight. Suppose that æsthetic culture could not in the least contribute to make us better intentioned, it would, at any rate, render us skilful so to act, even without a true moral intention, as a moral intention would have caused us to act. It is true, our action concerns by no means the court of morality, excepting as they are an expression of our intentions: but, reversely, our intentions concern by no means the physical court, and the plan of nature, excepting as they induce actions which further the design of nature. But now both the physical sphere of force, and the moral sphere of law, coincide so strictly, and are so intimately blended, that actions, which, according to their Form, coincide with a moral design, at the same time include in their contents a coincidence with a physical design; and as the whole natural structure only seems to exist, in order to make goodness, the highest of all designs, possible, so goodness may in turn be used as a means to sustain the natural structure. The order of nature, then, is made dependent upon the morality of our intentions, and we cannot offend against the moral world without at the same time producing disorder in the physical.

Now if we can never expect human nature, so long as it is human nature, to act as pure reason, uniformly and steadfastly, without interruption or relapse, and never to offend against moral order: if, with every conviction of the necessity and of the possibility of pure virtue, we must admit, how very contingent its actual practice is, and how little we need rely upon the invincibility of our better principles: if we are reminded, by this consciousness of our uncertainty, that the structure of nature suffers by each of our moral lapses: if we call to mind all this, it would be wickedly bold to hazard the weal of the world upon the chance of our virtue. An obligation results rather therefrom, for us at least to satisfy the physical design by the *contents* of our actions, even if we should not do as much for the moral design by their *form*—at least to discharge to the design of nature, as perfect instruments, the debt which we owe to reason, as perfect Persons, in order not to be disgraced

at the same time before both tribunals. If, because the legality of our conduct has no moral worth, we would make no regulations for it, the universal design might thereby be annulled; and before we were ready with our principles, all the ties of society would be dissolved. But the more contingent our morality is, the more necessary is it that we should devise precautions for our legality, and an inconsiderate or proud neglect of this can be morally imputed to us. Just as the insane man who divines his approaching paroxysm, avoids all knives, and voluntarily surrenders himself to be bound, in order not to be answerable, in a condition of sanity, for the crimes of his disordered brain—so are we obliged to bind ourselves by Religion and by æsthetic laws, that our passions, in the periods of its ascendancy, may not disturb the physical order.

I have not undesignedly coupled Religion and Taste together, since the merit is common to both, of serving as a surrogate for true virtue, according to the effect, if not equally according to the internal value, and of insuring legality where morality cannot be expected. Although a higher rank in the order of spirits would undoubtedly invest him, who needed neither the allurements of Beauty nor the prospects of immortality, to act in every crisis conformably to the reason, still the well-known limits of humanity compel the most rigid moralist to remit, in the application of his system, somewhat of its severity, although he need abate nothing from it in theory, and to secure the welfare of the human race, which would be but indifferently cared for by our contingent virtue, by the two strong anchors, Religion and Taste.



UPON

**THE PATHETIC.**



## P A T H O S .

REPRESENTATION of Sorrow—merely as Sorrow—is never the design of art, but it is extremely important as an instrument for that design. The representation of the supersensuous is the final design of art, and the tragic art in particular effects this, by making objective to us moral independence of nature's laws in the condition of emotion. The principle of freedom within us is only cognoscible through the opposition it makes to the violence of the feelings; but the opposition can be estimated only according to the force of the attack. If, then, the *Intelligence* in man would reveal itself as a power independent of nature, the latter must first display its whole strength before our eyes. The sensuousness must *suffer* deeply and violently: there must be Pathos, in order that the reason may announce its independence and represent itself *as acting*.

One can never know, whether *presence of mind* is an effect of his moral power, if he has not been convinced that it is not an effect of insensibility. It is no art, to be master over feelings which ruffle the soul's surface only lightly and transiently; but to preserve one's mental freedom in a storm, which stirs up the whole sensuous nature, requires a capacity of resistance, which is infinitely more sublime than any force of nature. One attains, then, to a representation of moral freedom, only through the most lively representation of suffering nature: and the tragic hero must legitimate himself in our opinion as a susceptible being, before we can do homage to him as a rational being, and believe in his strength of spirit.

Then Pathos is the first and indispensable requisite for a tragic artist, and he is allowed to carry the representation of sorrow as far as it can be done, without endangering his *final design*, without suppression of the moral freedom. He must, so to speak, give his hero or his reader the complete freight of sorrow, because otherwise it continues to be problematic, whether his opposition thereto is a mental action, and something *positive*, and not rather something purely *negative*, and a deficiency.

The latter is the case with the old French tragedy, in which we are very seldom or never shown *a suffering nature*, but generally see only cold, declamatory poets, or comedians upon stilts. The frosty tone of declamation extinguishes all true nature, and their adorable *decency* makes it completely impossible for French tragic poets to portray humanity in its truth. Decency falsifies even in its own proper place the expression of nature, and yet the art demands the latter imperatively. We can hardly believe it in a French tragic hero, that he *suffers*, for he delivers himself concerning his state of mind, like the calmest of men; and his incessant regard to the impression which he makes upon others, never allows him to leave to his own nature its freedom. The kings, princesses, and heroes of a Corneille and Voltaire, never forgot their *rank* in the most vehement passion, and they put off their *humanity* far sooner than their *dignity*. They are like the kings and emperors in the old picture-books, who go to bed with their crowns on.

How different with the Greeks, and those of the moderns who have composed in their spirit! The Greek is never ashamed of nature; he allows to the sensuousness its full rights, and yet is always secure from being overcome by it. His deeper and correcter intellect permit him to distinguish the contingent, which a bad taste magnifies, from the necessary. But all in man, that is not humanity, is contingent. The Grecian artist who has to represent a Laocoon, a Niobe, a Philoctetes, knows of no princess, no king, and no king's son:

he busies himself only with men. For this reason the wise sculptor throws aside the vestment, and shows us only naked figures, although he knows very well that this does not occur in actual life. He esteems clothing as something contingent, to which the necessary need never be postponed; and the laws of propriety or of need are not the laws of art. The sculptor should and will show us *men*, and garments only conceal them; he is right, then, in throwing them aside.

Just as the Grecian sculptor rejects the useless and troublesome burden of attire, in order to make room for *human nature*, so the Grecian poet releases his men from the equally useless and troublesome constraint of convenience, and from all the frigid laws of propriety, which only refine upon man and conceal his nature. In the Homeric poetry and in the tragedians, a suffering nature speaks in true, sincere, and impressive accents to our hearts; all the passions have a free play, and no feeling is restrained by the rule of propriety. The heroes are as susceptible as other men to all the sorrows of humanity; and this is the very thing that makes them heroes, that they feel suffering strongly and deeply, and yet are not vanquished by it. They love life, as ardently as the rest of us, but this sentiment does not *govern* them so much that they cannot resign it, if the duties of honour, or of manhood, demand such a surrender. Philoctetes fills the Grecian stage with his lamentations; even the maddened Hercules does not repress his grief. Iphigenia, destined for sacrifice, confesses with affecting openness, that she departs from the light of the sun with sorrow. The Greek never glories in sluggishness and indifference to suffering, but in *endurance* of all its forms. Even the Gods of the Greek must pay a tribute to nature, as soon as the poet of humanity would bring them nearer to us. The wounded Mars cries for pain as loud as ten thousand men; and Venus, scratched by a lance, mounts *weeping* to Olympus, and forswears all fights.

This tender *sensibility* for suffering, this warm, hearty, genuine, unconcealed *nature*, which moves us so deeply and



quickly in the Grecian works of art, is a model for all artists to imitate, and a law, which Grecian genius has prescribed to art. It is *nature* which eternally makes the first demand upon man, and which never need be refused: for the man—before he is anything else—is a susceptible being. *Reason* makes the second demand upon him, for he is a rational-susceptive being, a moral person; and it is the duty of the reason to govern, not to be governed by, nature. Then afterwards, if the right of nature has been first admitted, and if, secondly, the reason has maintained its own, it is allowable for *propriety* to make the third demand upon man, and to enjoin upon him regard for society, in the expression of his feelings as well as his intentions, that he may appear as a *civilized* being.

The first law of tragic art was, representation of suffering nature. The second is, representation of moral opposition to suffering.

Emotion, as emotion, is something indifferent, and its representation, considered for itself alone, would have no æsthetic value; for, once more to repeat it, nothing that concerns the sensuous nature alone, is worthy of representation. Hence, not only all merely relaxing (melting) emotions, but generally all *extreme degrees*, of whatever emotion, are beneath the *dignity* of tragic art.

The melting emotions, the merely tender excitements, belong to the province of the *agreeable*, with which the fine arts have nothing to do. They gratify the sense only by dissolution or relaxation, and relate only to the external, not to the internal, condition of a man. Many of our romances and tragedies, especially of the so-called Dramas (intermediates between comedy and tragedy), and the popular domestic pictures, belong to this class. They only produce exhaustion of the lachrymal sack, and a delightful alleviation of the vessels: but the spirit goes away empty, and the nobler power of man is thereby not in the least strengthened. Just so, says Kant, does many an one feel *edified* by a sermon, whereby absolutely nothing has been *built up*

within him.\* And the modern music especially seems to address only the sensuousness, thereby flattering the ruling taste, which only desires to be tickled agreeably, not to be laid hold upon, not to be powerfully moved, not to be elevated. Consequently that which is *melting* is preferred, and no matter how much confusion there may be in a concert room, it is suddenly all ear, while a melting passage is executed. An expression of sensuousness bordering upon animality, then usually appears upon every countenance, the drunken eyes swim, the open mouth is all desire, a voluptuous trembling seizes the whole body, the breath is fast and weak, in short, all the symptoms

\* (Tr.)—As illustrating what may be called dynamical preaching, and the spurious devotion, which, like the cannon-fever, only seizes raw-recruits—the whole of Kant's passage is worth quoting. With respect to spiritual edification, he says :—"When a fit signification is sought for this term, scarce any other can be assigned than this : *Edification is the ethical effect wrought upon our inner man by Devotion.* 'This effect cannot be the mental movement or emotion (for this is already involved in the conception of devotion), although the majority of the *soi-disant* devout (called upon this very account *Devotees*), place all edification just in this sentimental movement. Edification must therefore be understood to mean, the *Ethical Purchase* that devotion takes upon the actual amendment and building up of the moral characters of mankind. A structure of this sort can only then succeed when systematically gone about : firm principles, fashioned after well-understood conceptions, are, first of all, to be laid deep into the foundations of the heart ; from these, sentiments corresponding to the weight and magnitude of our several duties must rise, and be watched and protected against the snares and wiles of appetite and passion, thus uprearing and building up a new man—a *Temple of God*. Evidently this edifice can advance but slowly, but still some traces of superstructure ought to be perceptible. Many there are, however, who deem themselves much *edified* (by a discourse, psalmody or book), where absolutely nothing has been *built up*, ay ! where not even a finger has been stirred to help on the work : possibly they think that the ethic dome will, like the walls of Thebes, rise to the harmonious concert of sighs and yearning wishes."—*Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason.*—*Semple's Translation.*

of intoxication ensue: showing evidently, that the senses riot, while the spirit, or the principle of freedom in man, falls a prey to the violence of the sensuous impression. All such emotions, I affirm, are excluded from art by a noble and manly taste, because they please nothing but the *sense*, with which art can have no dealings.

But, on the other hand, those degrees of emotion are likewise excluded, which only *torture* the sense, without at the same time indemnifying the spirit. They oppress the mental freedom by *pain*, no less than the former do by *pleasure*, and therefore simply cause aversion, and no emotion worthy of art. Art must delight the spirit and please the freedom. He who falls a victim to pain, is no longer a suffering man, but only a tormented animal; for of man is absolutely demanded a moral opposition to suffering, as the only means of manifesting the principle of freedom, the intelligence, within.

Upon such grounds, those artists and poets are but wretchedly versed in their art, who think to secure Pathos by the merely *sensuous* power of emotion, and the most vivid delineations of suffering. They forget, that suffering itself is never the *final design* of a representation, and can never be the *direct* source of the satisfaction we feel at the tragic. The Pathetic is æsthetic, only so far as it is sublime. But effects, which result only from a sensuous source, and are founded only in affection of the sensibility, are never sublime, however much power they may betray: for the sublime springs *only* from the reason.

A representation of mere passion (whether pleasureable or painful), without a representation of the supersensuous resistive power, is called *common*, the opposite is called *noble*. *Common* and *noble* are the conceptions which always denote where they are used, a relation to the sympathy or unsympathy (*Nichtantheil*) of man's supersensuous nature with an action or a work. Nothing is *noble* which does not flow out of the reason: all that sensuousness produces for itself, is *common*. We say of a man, that his action is *common*, if he follows only the suggestions of his sensuous impulse: his action is

*respectable*, if he follows his impulse with regard only to laws; his action is *noble*, if he follows only the reason, without regarding his impulses. We call a likeness *common*, if it has nothing to manifest the intelligence in man: we call it *speaking*, if the spirit defines the feature, and *noble*, if pure spirit defines them. We call a work of architecture *common*, if it displays to us nothing but a physical design: we call it *noble*, if at the same time, independent of every physical design, it is a representation of ideas.

Then a good taste, I maintain, permits no representation of emotion, however forceful, which expresses mere physical suffering and physical resistance, without also manifesting the higher humanity, the presence of a supersensuous faculty—and this for the reason already unfolded, that suffering in itself is never pathetic and worth representing, but only the opposition to suffering. Therefore all the absolutely highest degrees of emotion are forbidden both to the artist and the poet, for they all suppress the internally resisting power, or rather presuppose such a suppression, since no emotion can attain its absolutely highest degree, so long as man's intelligence affords any opposition.

Now the question arises: how does this supersensuous resistive power make itself manifest in an emotion? In no other way than by governing, or, more generally, by resisting, the emotion. I say, the *emotion*; for sensuousness also can resist, but that is not a resistance to the emotion, only to its cause—not a moral, but a physical resistance, which even the worm displays, when we tread upon it, and the buffalo, when we wound it, without consequently exciting Pathos. When a suffering man gives expression to his feelings, when he seeks to avoid his enemy, and to put the suffering limb in safety, he acts in common with every animal, and from a ready instinct which does not first consult the will. Then that which does not make him cognizable as an intelligence, is no act of his humanity. It is true, sensuousness may each time resist its *enemy*, but not once *itself*.

On the contrary, the contest with emotion is a contest with sensuousness, and thus presupposes something distinct from the latter. A man, with the aid of his intellect and his muscular power, can defend himself against the object that causes him to suffer: but, against the suffering itself, he has no other weapon than the ideas of the reason.

Then where Pathos should obtain, these ideas must appear in the representation, or be excited by it. But ideas, positively and in a peculiar sense, are not to be represented, because nothing in intuition can correspond to them. But, negatively and indirectly, they are by all means to be represented, if something is given in the intuition, for which we should in vain search the conditions of *nature*. Every appearance, whose final cause cannot be deduced from the sensuous world, is an indirect representation of the supersensuous.

Now how does art succeed in representing something that is above nature, without employing supernatural means? What kind of an appearance must that be, which is accomplished by natural powers (for otherwise it would not be an appearance), and yet cannot without contradiction be deduced from physical causes? This is the problem: now, how does the artist solve it?

We must remember, that the phenomena which can be observed in a man in a condition of emotion, are of two species. They are such, firstly, as pertain to him merely as an animal, and follow as such only the law of nature, ungoverned by his will, or generally under no direct influence exerted by his self-dependent power. They are the immediate product of instinct, and blindly obey its laws. To this species belong for example, the organs of circulation, of respiration, and the whole surface of the skin: but those organs too, which are subjected to the will, do not always wait for its decision, but are often set in motion immediately by the instinct, there particularly, where pain or danger threatens the physical condition. So indeed our arm is under the authority of the will, but if we unconsciously grasp something hot, the withdrawing the hand is

certainly not an action of the will, but only an operation of instinct. Nay, still further: speech is certainly something beneath the government of the will, and yet the instinct can even dispose of this organ and work of the intellect at pleasure, without first consulting the will, as soon as a great pain or a strong emotion surprises us. Let the most collected stoic see of a sudden something exceedingly wonderful or an unexpected horror, let him be near when somebody slips and is on the point of falling into a chasm; a loud exclamation, and that too not a merely inarticulate tone, but a perfectly distinct word, will involuntarily escape him, and his *nature* will have acted earlier than his *will*. This then serves to illustrate, that there are appearances in man, which cannot be ascribed to his Person, as intelligence, but only to his instinct as a power of nature.

But, secondly, there are also appearances, which exist under the influence and under the dominion of the will, or which at least we may consider such as the will has *power to hinder*; for which then, the Person is responsible, and not the instinct. It belongs to instinct, to watch with blind zeal the interest of sensuousness; but to the Person, to limit instinct by respect for laws. Pure instinct has no regard for law; but the Person has to provide that no detriment befalls the prescriptions of reason through any act of instinct. So much then is certain, that not all the appearances of man in a state of emotion are to be defined unconditionally by the instinct, but that limits can be put to it by the will of man. If instinct alone defines all the appearances in man, nothing exists that can remind us of the *Person*, and what we have before us is only nature, that is, an animal: for every natural being under the dominion of instinct is called animal. If, then, the Person would be represented, some appearances must obtain in man, which have either been defined in opposition to instinct, or yet not *by* instinct. The fact that instinct has not defined them, suffices to lead us to a higher source, as soon as we understand that instinct would certainly have defined them differently, if its power had not been broken.

We are now in a condition to state the way and manner, in which the supersensuous, self-dependent power of man, his moral self, can be represented during emotion; namely as follows. All the parts which obey only nature, and which the will, either always or under certain circumstances, cannot dispose of, must betray the presence of suffering; but those parts which are removed from the *blind* force of instinct, and do not necessarily obey the law of nature, must show few or no traces of this suffering, must appear, then, in a certain degree free. Now we recognise, in this disharmony between those features which have been stamped upon the animal nature by the law of necessity, and between those, which the self-acting spirit determines, a *supersensuous principle* in man, which is able to limit the operations of nature, and thus to manifest itself as something distinct from them. The purely animal part of man obeys the law of nature, and can appear oppressed by the violence of an emotion. Through this part, the whole strength of suffering displays itself, and serves, as it were, for a measure, by which we may estimate the resistance; for the strength of the resistance, or man's moral force, can only be judged according to the strength of the attack. The more decisive and violent is the development of emotion *in the province of animality*, without its being able to maintain the same force *in the province of humanity*, the more recognisable does the latter become, the more gloriously is man's moral independence revealed, the more pathetic is the representation, and the more sublime is the Pathos.\*

\* I comprehend within the *province of animality*, the whole system of those appearances in man, which are subject to the blind violence of native instinct, and are fully explicable without supposing a freedom of the will; within the *province of humanity*, I comprehend those which receive their laws from the freedom. If a representation of emotion in the province of animality is *deficient*, we remain cold; if, on the contrary, it *prevails* in the province of humanity, it disturbs and disgusts us. An emotion must always

This æsthetic principle is made into an intuition in the statues of the ancients: but it is hard to bring under conceptions, and to express in words, the impression which the sensuous act of sight gives. The group of Laocoon and his children is probably a measure of what the plastic art of the ancients was able to effect in Pathos.

“Laocoon,” says Winckelmann,† “is a nature in the deepest pain, made in the image of a man, who seeks to collect against it a conscious strength of spirit: and while his suffering swells the muscles and strains the nerves, the soul armed with power appears in the channeled forehead, and the breast heaves over the confined breath and the stifled expression of feeling, as it strives to comprehend and to lock the pain within. The breath laden with anxious sighs, which he swallows and represses, exhausts the abdomen, and makes the sides hollow, by which we may judge of the agitation of the viscera. But his own suffering seems to afflict him less than that of his children, who turn their faces to him and cry for help: for the paternal heart shows itself in the saddened eyes, and sympathy seems to float over them in a dim vapour. His countenance is complaining, but not exclaiming; his eyes are directed after higher aid. The mouth is full of sadness, and the fallen underlip is heavy with it: but it is mingled in the arched upper lip with pain, which, with an expression of chagrin, as if at unworthy and unmerited suffering, ascends to the nose, causes it to swell, and appears in the distended and up-drawn no-

remain *unreduced* in the former province: its reduction may first occur in the province of humanity. A suffering man, represented as weeping and lamenting, will but feebly move us, because sighs and tears already reduce the pain in the province of animality. A mute and stifled pain seizes us much more powerfully, where we find no help in *nature*, but are obliged to take refuge in something which lies out beyond nature: and in this very *reference to the super-sensuous* lies Pathos and the power of tragedy.

† In his History of Art, p. 699. Vienna: quarto edition.



trils. The conflict between pain and opposition, united under the forehead, as into a focus, is shaped with great truth: for while the pain draws up the eyebrows, the struggle against it presses down the cuticle above the eye against the upper eyelid, so that it is almost covered by the impending flesh. The artist has sought to give the nature, which he could not improve, more development, more tension, more power: the greatest beauty appears where the greatest pain lies. The left side, into which the snake sends its venom with furious bite, is the one which appears to suffer most sharply, from the closer susceptibility of the heart. His legs lift themselves in order to escape from his calamity: no part is in rest, the chisel-strokes themselves assist in indicating a stiffened skin."

How truly and finely is the conflict of intelligence with the suffering of sensuous nature developed in this description, and how strikingly given are the appearances in which animality and humanity, the constraint of nature and the freedom of reason, reveal themselves. Virgil has depicted the same scene in his *Æneid*: but it did not lie in the plan of the epic poet to linger over the mental condition of Laocoon, as the sculptor was obliged to do. With Virgil the whole relation is merely accessory, and the purpose, whereto it should serve him, is sufficiently attained by the simple physical representation, without a necessity that he should give us deep glances into the soul of the suffering one: since he will not so much move us to compassion, as penetrate us with horror. In this respect, then, the duty of the poet was merely negative, namely, not to carry the representation of suffering nature so far as to lose thereby all expression of humanity or of moral resistance, because otherwise aversion and indignation must infallibly ensue. Consequently he preferred to restrict himself to the representation of the *cause* of suffering, and thought proper to enlarge more minutely upon the dreadfulness of the two serpents, and upon the fury with which they fall upon their victim, than upon the sensations of the latter. Upon those he dwelt but slightly, because it was important that he should preserve

unweakened the idea of a divine retribution and the impression of horror. If, on the contrary, he had permitted us to know as much of Laocoon's Person, as the sculptor has, the suffering man, and no longer the avenging divinity, would have been the hero in the action, and the episode would have lost its consistency with the whole.

We are well acquainted with Virgil's relation through Lessing's excellent commentary. But the purpose, for which Lessing used it, was only to make perceptible the limits of poetic and picturesque representation in this example, not to evolve therefrom the conception of Pathos. But it seems to me to be no less useful for the latter design, and I may be permitted to run through it again with this view.

Ecce autem gemini Tenedo tranquilla per alta  
 (Horresco referens) immensis orbibus angues  
 Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad littora tendunt.  
 Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta, jubæque  
 Sanguineæ exsuperant undas, pars cætera pontum  
 Pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga.  
 Fit sonitus spumante salo, jamque arva tenebant,  
 Ardentis oculos suffecti sanguine et igni,  
 Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.

Here power, the first of the three above-cited conditions of the sublime, is given: that is to say, a mighty power of nature, which is bent upon destruction and derides all resistance. But that this power may be at the same time *fearful*, and that fear *sublime*, depends upon two different mental operations, that is, upon two representations, which we create spontaneously within. First, when we compare this irresistible power of nature with the weak resistive ability of the physical man, we recognise it to be fearful; and secondly, when we refer it to our will, and call into consciousness the absolute independence of the latter of every natural influence, it becomes for us a sublime object. But we assume these two relations, for the poet gave us nothing but an object armed with mighty force and striving to

display it. If we *tremble* before it, it happens only because we *imagine* ourselves, or a creature like us, in a struggle with it. If, during our tremor, we feel elevated, it is because we are conscious that we, even as the victim of this power, should have nothing to fear for our free self, for the autonomy of our determining volition. In short, the representation so far is only contemplatively sublime.

Diffugimus visu exsangues, illi agmine certo  
Laocoonta petunt.

The mightiness is now *given* as fearful also, and the contemplative sublime passes over into Pathos. We see it actually enter the lists with the weakness of man. Laocoon or ourselves, the effect differs only in degree. The sympathetic impulse terrifies the impulse for self-preservation, the monsters break loose upon us, and all flight is vain.

It now depends no longer upon us, whether we will measure this power with our own, relatively to our own existence. This takes place in the object itself without our co-operation. Then our fear has not, as in the preceding moment, a subjective ground merely in our minds, but an objective ground in the object. For though we recognise the whole to be a pure fiction of the imagination, yet we distinguish, even in this fiction, a representation which is imparted from without, from another, which we produce spontaneously within ourselves.

Then the mind loses a part of its freedom, because it receives from without what it previously created through its spontaneity. The representation of peril acquires an appearance of objective reality, and the emotion becomes serious.

If now, we were nothing but sensuous beings, and obeyed only the instinct of self-preservation, we should stand still here and remain in a condition of mere passivity. But there is something in us which takes no part in the affections of the sensuous nature, and whose activity conforms to no sensuous conditions. Now, greater or less room will be left for suffer-

ing nature, and a greater or less remainder of self activity in the emotion, according as this spontaneous principle (the moral disposition) has developed itself in a mind.

In minds morally developed, the terrible (in imagination), has a swift and easy transition to the sublime. As the imagination loses its freedom, the reason makes valid its own: and the mind *takes an inward extension only so much the more, as it finds limits without*. Repulsed from all the intrenchments, which could afford a physical protection to the sensuous being, we throw ourselves into the impregnable fortress of our moral freedom, and thus gain an absolute and infinite safety, while we abandon a merely comparative and precarious defence in the field of phenomena. But for the very reason, that it must come to this physical stress, before we can seek aid from our moral nature, we can purchase this lofty feeling of freedom only through suffering. The common soul continues fast in this suffering, and never feels, in the sublime of Pathos, anything more than the terrible: on the contrary, a self-dependent mind passes, from this very suffering, to the feeling of his lordliest energy, and knows how to create sublimity from everything terrible.

Laocoonta petunt, ac primum parva duorum  
Corpora gnatorum serpens amplexus uterque  
Implicat, ac miseros morsu depascitur artus.

It produces a great effect, that the moral man (the father) is attacked before the physical man. All emotions are more æsthetic at second hand, and no sympathy is stronger than that which we feel with sympathy.

Post ipsum auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem  
Corripiunt.

Now is the moment to establish the hero in our esteem as a moral person, and the poet seizes this moment. We know from his description, the whole force and fury of the hostile

monsters, and know how fruitless all opposition is. Now were Laocoon only a common man, he would consult his own interest, and, like the other Trojans, seek his safety in a hasty flight. But he has a heart in his bosom, and the peril of his children constrains him to his own destruction. This single trait alone makes him worthy of all our compassion: and we should have been moved and shocked, at whatever moment the serpents might have seized him. But when it happens at the moment, when he is worthy of our veneration as a father, when his death is represented as the immediate result, as it were, of his fulfilment of a paternal duty—this enflames our sympathy to the highest. He is now as one, who surrenders himself to destruction from free choice, and his death is an action of the will.

In all Pathos, then, the sense must become interested through suffering, the spirit through freedom. If a pathetic representation is wanting in an expression of suffering nature, it is without *aesthetic* power, and our heart remains cold. If it fails in an expression of ethical disposition, it can never, with all its sensuous power, be *pathetic*, and will infallibly disturb our perception. The suffering man must be apparent through all the freedom of spirit, and the spirit, capable of self-dependence, must appear through all the suffering of humanity.

But the independence of spirit can be manifested in a condition of suffering, in a twofold manner. Either *negatively*—if the ethical man does not receive law from the physical, and the *condition* is not allowed to have a causality for the *inclination*: or *positively*—if the ethical man *gives* law to the physical, and the intention preserves causality for the condition. From the first, results the sublime of *resolution*: from the second, the sublime of *action*.

Every character that is independent of destiny is a sublimity of resolution. "A brave spirit in conflict with adversity," says Seneca, "is an attractive spectacle, even for the gods." The Roman Senate after the reverse at Cannæ gives us such a sight.

Even Milton's Lucifer, when for the first time he casts his eyes around Hell, his future abode, penetrates us, on account of this strength of soul, with a feeling of admiration. He exclaims :—

“Hail, horrors : hail  
 Infernal world ; and thou profoundest hell  
 Receive thy new possessor ; one who brings  
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.  
 The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.  
 Here at least  
 We shall be free.”

The answer of Medea in the tragedy belongs to the same class.

Of sublimity of resolution we may have *intuition*, for it depends upon co-existence ; on the contrary, sublimity of action may be only *imagined*, for it depends upon succession, and the intellect is compelled, on account of the suffering, to make a deduction from a free resolution. Consequently only the first is for the sculptor, because he only can successfully represent coexisting ideas ; but the poet can diffuse himself over both. Even if the sculptor has to represent a sublime action, he has to convert it first into a sublime resolution.

It is demanded for sublimity of action, that the suffering of a man should not only have no influence upon his moral quality, but, quite the reverse, should be the work of his moral character. This can be in two ways. Either mediately, and according to the law of freedom, if he *chooses* suffering out of regard for some duty. In this case the conception of duty determines him as *motive*, and his suffering is *an action of the will*. Or immediately, and according to the law of necessity, if he *atones* morally for a duty transgressed. In this case the conception of duty determines him as *force*, and his suffering is only an *effect*. We have an example of the first in Regulus, when, in order to keep his word, he surrenders himself to the revengefulness of the Carthagenians : he would have served for an example of the second, had he broken his word, and had the

consciousness of this fault made him miserable. In both cases the life has a moral ground, only with this difference, that he shows us, in the first case, his moral character, in the other, only his moral determinateness. In the first case he appears as a person morally great, in the second, only as an object æsthetically great.

This latter distinction is important for tragic art, and therefore deserves a stricter examination.

That man is a sublime object, only in an æsthetic estimation, who represents to us in his *condition* the dignity of human determinateness, supposing that we do not see this determinateness realized in his *Person*. He becomes sublime, in a moral estimation, only when he also conducts, as a Person, conformably to that determinateness—when our regard concerns not only his ability, but the use of this ability, when not only his disposition, but his actual demeanour, acquires dignity. It is something quite distinct, whether, in our criticism, we regard the moral ability, and this possibility of an absolute freedom of the will, or the use of this ability, and the reality of this freedom of the will.

It is quite a different thing, I say, and this difference lies not only in the objects criticised, but in the different critical methods. The same object may displease us, when regarded morally, and be very attractive, æsthetically. But if it gives us satisfaction in both the critical courts, it is effected with both in a manner entirely different. By being æsthetically useful, it becomes morally unsatisfying, and when morally satisfying, not æsthetically useful.

For example, I imagine the self-sacrifice of Leonidas at Thermopylæ. Morally considered, this action is a representation of the moral law fulfilled against every opposition of instinct: æsthetically considered, it is a representation of the moral ability independent of every constraint of instinct. This action *satisfies* my moral sense (the reason): it *transports* my æsthetic sense (the imagination).

I offer the following reason for this difference in my perceptions of the same object.

As our being separates into two principles or natures, so

also our feelings, in conformity with these, separate into two species entirely distinct. As a rational being we feel approbation or disapprobation: as a sensuous being, we feel pleasure or displeasure. Both feelings, approbation and pleasure, are founded upon a satisfaction given: the former upon satisfaction of a *claim*, for the reason *demand*s only, but does not need: the latter upon satisfaction of a *solicitation*, for the sense *needs* only, and cannot demand. The demands of reason and the needs of sense are both related to each other, as necessity to exigency: both, then, are comprehended under the conception of necessity, only with this difference, that the necessity of reason takes place unconditionally, but the necessity of sense only under conditions. But with both the satisfaction is contingent. Every feeling, of pleasure as well as of approbation, has its final cause, then, in coincidence of the contingent with the necessary. If the necessity is an Imperative, the feeling will be approbation; if it is an exigency, the feeling will be pleasure: and both of them stronger in degree, according as the satisfaction is more contingent.

Now a demand of the reason underlies every moral decision, namely, that a thing be done morally, and an unconditioned necessity exists, that we will what is right. But since the will is free, it is (physically) contingent whether we really do it. If we actually do it, then this coincidence of chance in the use of freedom with the Imperative of the reason, acquires favour or approbation, and in a higher degree, according as the opposition of inclinations makes *this* use of freedom more contingent and doubtful.

On the contrary, the object, æsthetically considered, is related to the *exigency of the imagination*, which cannot dictate, but can only *desire*, that the contingent should coincide with its interests. But it is the interest of imagination, to maintain itself in play, *free from laws*. To this disposition for license, the moral obligation of the will, which strictly defines for it its object, is nothing less than favourable: and as the moral obligation of the will is the object of moral judgment, we easily



see, that the imagination could not find its account in judging after this fashion. But a moral obligation of the will can be imagined only under the supposition of its absolute independence of the constraint of natural impulses: then the *possibility* of the moral postulates freedom, and consequently coincides herein most completely with the interest of the fancy. But since the fancy with its exigency cannot so prescribe to the will of an individual, as the reason can with its Imperative, the ability of freedom, in its relation to the fancy, is something contingent, and hence must excite pleasure, as a coincidence of chance with that which is (conditionally) necessary. If, then, we criticise that deed of Leonidas *morally*, we regard it from a point of view whence we apprehend its contingency less than its necessity. If, on the contrary, we criticise it *æsthetically*, we regard it from a stand-point, where its necessity is displayed less than its contingency. It is *duty*, for every will to act thus, as soon as it is a moral will: but that there generally is a freedom of will, which makes it possible to act thus, is a *favour* of nature with regard to that faculty for which freedom is in exigency. Then if the moral sense—the reason—criticises a virtuous action, the highest result is approbation, because the reason can never find *more* than, and seldom only *as much* as, it demands. If, on the contrary, the æsthetic sense—the imagination—criticises the same action, a positive pleasure results, because the imagination can never demand an unanimity with its exigency, and must therefore find itself surprised at the actual satisfying of it, as at a lucky chance. We approve Leonidas, because he *actually resolved* the heroic act: we exult and are delighted that he *could* resolve it.

The difference between both kinds of criticism becomes more visible, if we select an action, upon which the moral and the æsthetic decisions differ. Take the self-cremation of Peregrine Proteus at Olympia.\* Judging morally, I cannot approve of

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\* (Tr.)—Peregrine Proteus was a juggler who voluntarily burnt himself at one of the Olympic games. He lived in the first half

this action so far as I find impure motives active in it, on whose account the *duty* of self-preservation is postponed. Judging, æsthetically, this action pleases me, and for this reason, that it testifies to an ability of the will, to resist even the mightiest of all instincts, the impulse of self-preservation. Whether it was a pure moral intention or only a more powerful sensuous attraction, which suppressed the impulse of self-preservation in the enthusiast Proteus, I care not in estimating it æsthetically; in which case I forsake the individual, abstract the relation of *his* will to the law of will, and imagine the human will generally, as a generic faculty, in relation to the whole force of nature. Morally considered, we have seen that self-preservation was conceived as a *duty*, whose violation consequently offended; on the contrary, æsthetically considered, it

of the second century. Being compelled to flee into Palestine, on account of some monstrous excesses, he there became a Christian, and was distinguished for his zeal, which gained him a dungeon and the *prestige* of persecution. After he was set at liberty, he recommenced his wanderings, but fell unfortunately into the full tide of his old excesses, and was finally as thoroughly detested as he had been blindly adored. Wishing, however, to do one more thing for the sake of glory, and to quit time and space with *eclat*, he gave out that he would burn himself at Olympia: which he did, A. D. 168. Wieland has elevated Peregrine into the hero of one of his romances, and has made a noble enthusiast out of the juggler; his youthful fancy is filled with marvellous conceptions and phantasms—he strives to acquire a knowledge of himself and the world, which shall elevate him to perfection and the bliss of spirits. He seeks this, in order that he may live the life of a spirit, converse with divinities and demonic influences, and rise from one degree of Beauty to another, till he has intuition and enjoyment of the archetypal Beauty, the heavenly Venus, who is continent of all Beauty and perfection. “One easily sees,” says Gervinus, “how this, a copy of Lavater, a Christian mystic, and his yearning after a divine union, is the system of devout Epicureanism.” Wieland’s *Agathodemon* is very like this romance of Peregrine Proteus, being a psychological apology for Apollonius of Tyana. “It is a substitute for the inelegant biography of Apollonius by Philostrates, as Proteus is for Lucian’s jesting Dialogue.”

was regarded as an *interest*, whose postponement consequently pleased. Then the operation which we perform in the former kind of criticism, is precisely reversed in the latter. Here we place the sensuously limited individual and the pathologically affective will, over against the absolute law of will and the infinite duty of spirit; there, on the contrary, we place the absolute *ability* of will and the infinite *force* of spirit, over against the constraint of nature and the limits of sensuousness. Hence the æsthetic judgment leaves us free, and elevates and inspires us, since we already gain a manifest vantage against sensuousness, through the mere ability to will absolutely, through the mere disposition for morality—since the mere possibility of extricating ourselves from the constraint of nature, flatters our need of freedom. Hence the moral judgment confines and humiliates us, since we find ourselves more or less at a disadvantage with every special act of the will against the absolute law of will, and the fancy's impulse of freedom is contradicted by the limitation of the will to a single mode of determinateness, which duty positively demands. Here we soar from the actual to the possible, and from the individual to the race; there, on the contrary, we descend from the possible to the actual, and confine the race within the limits of the individual: no wonder, then, that an æsthetic judgment gives us a feeling of expansion, and that, on the contrary, a moral judgment leaves us cramped and bound.\*

\* This solution, I remark in passing, also explains to us the diversity of æsthetic impression, which the Kantian representation of Duty is accustomed to make upon its different critics. Not a contemptible portion of the public finds this representation of Duty very humiliating: another portion finds it infinitely exalting for the heart. Both are right, and the reason of the contradiction exists only in the different stand-point, from which the two parties regard this object. The mere performance of one's obligations certainly contains nothing great, and in so far as the best we are able to perform is nothing but the fulfilment, and a meagre fulfilment too, of our Duty, the highest virtue contains nothing in-

It follows from all this, that the moral and æsthetic criticism, far from supporting, rather impede, each other, since they give the mind two entirely contradictory directions: for the conformity, which the reason demands as moral arbitress, does not consist with the license which the imagination desires as æsthetic arbitress. Hence an object will the less serve for æsthetic use, according as it is qualified for moral use; and if the poet must nevertheless select it, he will do well, so to handle it, as not so much to refer our reason to the *rule* of the will, as rather to refer our fancy to the *ability* of the will. The poet must take this course for his own sake, for where our freedom begins his domination ends. We are *his* only so long as we make external intuitions: he has lost us, as soon as we commence an introversion. But the latter inevitably ensues, as soon as an object no longer *considered as a phenomenon* by us, begins to *rule us as a law*.

Even of the utterances of the sublimest virtue, the poet can use nothing for *his* purposes, save what belongs to those of *power*. He does not trouble himself concerning the direction of power. The poet, even if he places before our eyes the most perfect moral pattern, has no other aim, *and need have no other*, than to delight us by its contemplation. But nothing

spiring. But, to perform one's obligations truly and steadfastly through all the limitations of sensuous nature, and to obey undeviatingly the holy spirit-law in the fetters of matter, this, certainly, is exalting and worthy of admiration. Our virtue, reckoned against the spirit-world, has truly nothing meritorious, and however much it may cost us, we shall ever be *unprofitable servants*: on the other hand, reckoned against the world of sense, it is an object all the more elevating. So far as we judge all actions morally, and refer them to the ethic law, we shall have little reason to be proud of our morality: but so far as we regard these actions potentially, and refer our mental ability, which underlies them, to the empirical world—that is, so far as we judge æsthetically—a certain self-estimation is allowable, nay, it is even necessary; because we discover a principle within us, that is great and infinite beyond all comparison.

that fails to improve our Subject, can delight us, and nothing that does not elevate our spiritual ability, can spiritually delight us. But how can the dutifulness of another improve *our* Subject and increase spiritual power? That he *actually* fulfils his duty, depends upon a contingent use which he makes of his freedom, and which, therefore, can demonstrate nothing for us. What we share with him is only the *ability* for a like dutifulness; and when, in perceiving his ability, we perceive also our own, we feel an elevation of our spiritual power. Then it is only through the represented possibility of an absolutely free will, that its actual exercise pleases our æsthetic sense.

One will become more convinced of this, by reflecting how little the poetic power of the impression which moral characters or actions make upon us, depends upon their *historic reality*. The pleasure we take in ideal characters loses nothing by the recollection that they are poetic fictions: for all æsthetic effect is based upon *poetic*, not upon *historic*, truth. But poetic truth does not consist in the fact that something has really happened but that it could happen—in the internal potentiality, then, of things. The æsthetic power must then already lie in the represented possibility.

Even in the actual adventures of historical personages, the Poetic does not consist in the fact of existence, but in the faculty announced through the existence. The circumstance, that these persons really lived, and that these events really occurred, can, very often, it is true, increase our satisfaction, but with a foreign alloy that is far more detrimental than advantageous to the poetic impression. The idea has been long entertained, of rendering a service to the poetry of our Fatherland, by recommending to poets national objects for elaboration. The Grecian poetry, it is said, had such a mastery over the heart, because it depicted native scenes and immortalised native deeds. It is not to be denied that, by virtue of this circumstance, the poetry of the ancients produced effects of which the modern poetry cannot boast; but did these effects belong to the art and to the poet? Alas for Grecian art, if it had

nothing but this fortuitous advantage over modern genius—alas for Grecian taste, if it was forced to depend for its triumph upon these historic associations in the works of its poets! Only a barbarous taste needs the spur of private interest to win it to beauty, and only the bungler borrows from the material a power which he despairs of imparting to the form. Poetry should not take her way through the cold region of memory, and should never make learning her interpreter, or self-interest her advocate. She must find the heart, since from that she flows; she must not single out the citizen in the man, but the man in the citizen.

It is fortunate that true genius does not care much for the hints which are peevishly thrown out for its benefit, with a capacity not so good as the intention: else Sulzer\* and his

\* (Tr.)—J. G. Sulzer: 1719-79. He was the last critical defender of what Gervinus calls musical poetry. His book (a sort of æsthetic dictionary) is full of *radoterie* about the inspiration of the poet and his methodical madness, something which Sulzer never experienced. He is desirous of teaching artists *how* they are to conduct during this inspiration, and has many things to whisper into the ear of philosophers. "Batteux and Baumgarten are his æsthetic authorities; Lessing is hardly mentioned in his bulky volume; Bodmer and Klopstock are his poetic ideals, and he rates the *Noachid*, in commendation of which he wrote a special book, higher than the *Messias*; he admires Rousseau and Dante on the ground of a musical or seraphic relationship, though he does not profess to understand the latter—&c." "He comprehends the Ethical and the Æsthetic under the moral feeling, which is the source of poetry. It is the final design of Art to awaken moral feelings: he strives in particular to excite a more refined feeling in the most respectable part of the nation, since he hopes by this means to advance the arts, and by the arts to fashion the whole public life. He seeks to make a permanent union of poetry with religion and politics, to give festivals and everything national as a *point d'appui* for the arts—that the people may be inflamed with zeal for the rights of humanity; and he considers those men specially commissioned to be poets, whose ruling passion is love for the common weal. This disposition made Herder favourably dis-

followers would have given a very ambiguous shape to German poetry. To impart to men a moral culture, and to kindle national feelings in the citizen, is truly an honourable mission for the poet, and the Muses know best, how closely therewith the arts of the sublime and beautiful may assimilate. But that which would eminently prosper in a mediate connexion with poetry, would have, in an immediate connexion, but an ill success. Poetry never carries on with man a special occupation; and no instrument more awkward could be chosen, for the proper execution of any isolated commission, of any detail. Its sphere of action is the totality of human nature, and only so far as it has an influence upon the character, can it influence its single operations. Poetry can be to man what love is to the hero. It can neither counsel him, nor smite with him, nor perform any labour for him: but it can bring him up to be a hero, can summon him to deeds, and arm him with strength for all that he ought to be.

Then the æsthetic power, with which sublimity of intention and action seizes us, depends by no means upon the interest of the reason, that something should *become* well done, but upon the interest of the imagination, that well-doing *should be possible*—that is, that no sentiment, however mighty, may be oppressive to freedom of mind. But this possibility lies in every strong expression of freedom and volitive power; and wherever a poet meets with such, he has found an appropriate object for his representation. As regards *his* interest, it is a matter of indifference, from what class of characters, bad or good, he selects his heroes, as the same measure of power

posed towards him; but all who longed for the development of a pure poetic spirit opposed him, and his theory remained a canon only for a Hackert." Goethe declared against his theory, and was especially severe upon the glorifications of the *Noachid*: "After the waters of epic poetry have subsided, few pilgrims will be left to visit the ruins of Bodmer's ark on the hill of Devotion."—See *Gervinus*, iv. 241.

which is necessary for the good, may in consequence be very often demanded in the bad. How much more we regard, in our æsthetic judgments, the power than the direction of the power, freedom than conformity, is sufficiently evident from the fact that we prefer to see power and freedom expressed at the expense of conformity, rather than conformity preserved at the expense of power and freedom. As soon, then, as cases occur, in which the moral law unites itself with motives that threaten to carry away the will by their violence, the character gains æsthetically, if it is able to resist these motives. A vicious person begins to interest us, as soon as he must venture life and happiness, in order to carry out his evil will; on the contrary, a virtuous person fails to attract our attention in the same proportion as his happiness itself compels him to act with propriety. Revenge, for example, is unquestionably an ignoble and a base emotion. Yet not the less does it become æsthetic, as soon it costs the one who exercises it, a grievous sacrifice. When Medea murders her children, she aims through the deed at Jason's heart, but at the same time she inflicts a grievous wound upon her own; and her revenge becomes æsthetically sublime, as soon as she displays the tenderness of the mother.\*

\* (Tr.)—The union of mental power, of woman's revenge and of maternal tenderness, into one effect of pathetic sublimity, is finely represented by Seneca, in his tragedy of *Medea*: Act v. Sc. 5. The following are parts of her long soliloquy, in the midst of the flames of Corinth, set on fire by her magical rites:

Seek some new revenge  
Till now unheard of: rally all thy powers—  
Break through the barriers of shame and right:  
A hand that's pure can wreak but mean revenge.  
Bend to the task and rouse thy sluggish ire,  
And from thy deepest nature summon forth  
Long-smothered power. What I have done till now,  
Shall be called virtue. Let the nations know  
How harmless and of note how common were  
My former crimes. I simply tried my power—



Herein the æsthetic judgment contains more that is true, than we commonly believe. Vices, which testify to a strength of will, openly announce a greater disposition for true moral freedom, than virtues, which steady themselves upon an inclination ; since it costs the consequent wickedness only a single victory over itself, a single reversal of maxims, in order to apply to goodness the whole consequence and ability of will, which was expended upon crime. Otherwise how comes it, that we repel with aversion a semi-virtuous character. and often follow with shuddering admiration one of unmitigated depravity ? Unquestionably because we surrender with the former, even the possibility of an absolutely free will, while, with every expression of the latter, we perceive that he might raise himself to the whole dignity of humanity by a single act of his will.

What could rude art or girlish rage effect?  
I am Medea now — ills sharpen wit.

Ye Gods! I see the goal!  
My soul collect thyself. My children, come,  
Make expiation for a father's guilt.  
Horror invades my heart—my limbs are cold,  
And my whole bosom trembles. Rage departs,  
And all the mother banishes the wife.

Wherefore does anger and then love impel me?  
Contending passions make their sport of me,  
As when the arrowy winds wage furious war,  
And swell the ocean with opposing waves,  
And currents fret the deep.

But exile presses : even now,  
Snatched from my bosom they are borne away  
Weeping and grieving. They are lost to me—  
Then never let them feel a father's kiss.  
O rage! I follow thee. Marshal the way.

Ye Furies! Sear my eyeballs  
With all your torches : I am ripe for crime.  
Now act, my soul. Oblivion shall not hide  
This last sad summoning of fortitude.

Then in æsthetic criticisms we are not interested for morality in itself, but only for freedom, and the former can please our imagination, only so far as it makes the latter apparent. Hence one evidently involves together proper limits, if, in æsthetic things, he demands moral conformity, and would force the imagination out of her legitimate province, in order to extend the realm of reason. Some would either entirely subjugate her, thus gaining no æsthetic effect at all, or divide her authority with the reason, thus gaining little for morality. By attempting to pursue two different designs, there is danger that both will fail. One would fetter freedom of fancy by moral conformity, and destroy the necessity of reason by the caprice of the imagination.



UPON  
THE SUBLIME.



## THE SUBLIME.

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"No man must *must*,"\* said the Jew Nathan to the Dervis, and the expression is true far more extensively, than one might at first allow. The will is the distinctive feature of man, and reason itself is only its eternal rule. All nature acts rationally; man's prerogative is only, that he acts rationally with consciousness and will. All other things *must*; man is the being who wills.

For this reason nothing is so unworthy of a man, as to suffer violence, for violence disannuls him. Whoever inflicts it upon us calls into question nothing less than humanity; whoever cowardly submits to it, forfeits his humanity. But this pretension to absolute freedom from all that is violence, seems to presuppose a condition possessing sufficient power, to repel every other power. If he finds himself in a condition, which does not maintain the highest rank in the empire of powers, there results thence an unhappy contradiction between impulse and ability.

Man is found in this situation. Encircled by countless powers, all of which are superior and play the master over him, he makes pretensions by his nature, that he will endure no violence. It is true, he ingeniously enhances his natural powers by means of his intellect, and, up to a certain point, actually succeeds in physically becoming lord over all that is physical. There are expedients, says the proverb, against everything except Death. But this single exception, if it really is one in the strictest sense, would remove the whole concep-

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\* "Kein Mensch muß müssen."

tion of man. He can never be that being who wills, if there is even a *single* case, where he absolutely *must*, what he does not will. This single horror, *what he only must and does not will*, will haunt him like a spectre, and, as is actually the case with most men, leave him a prey to the blind terrors of fancy; his boasted freedom is absolutely nothing, if he is bound even in a single point alone. Culture should place man in freedom, and be serviceable to him in developing his whole conception. It should thus make him capable of maintaining his will — for man is the being who wills.

This is possible in a twofold manner. Either *really*, if man opposes force to force, if, as nature, he governs nature; or *ideally*, if he steps forth from nature, and thus abolishes, in respect to himself, the conception of force. That which is auxiliary to the first, is called physical culture. ● Man develops his intellect and his sensuous powers, either to convert the powers of nature according to their own laws, into instruments of his will, or to place himself in safety from those operations which he cannot control. But the powers of nature can be governed or repulsed only up to a certain point; she withdraws from the might of man beyond this point, and subjects him to her own.

Now then his freedom would be lost, if he were capable of no other than physical culture. But he ought to be a man without exception, and consequently in no case suffer anything *against* his will. If then he can no longer oppose a proportional physical power to other physical powers, nothing remains, in order to be freed from force, but *entirely to annihilate a relation* which is so detrimental to him, and to abolish *in idea* a force which he must suffer *in fact*. But abolishing a force in idea, is nothing else than voluntarily submitting to it. That which qualifies him for this, is called moral culture.

The man of moral cultivation, and he alone, is entirely free. He is either superior to nature, as ● force, or he harmonizes with her. Nothing is force which she practises with regard to him, for before it comes to him, it has already become *his own*

*action*, and dynamical nature never reaches *him*, since he spontaneously withdraws himself from all that she can reach. But that this character which morality teaches under the conception of resignation in necessity, and religion under the idea of submission to the divine ordinances, may become a work of free choice and reflection, there is requisite a greater clearness of thought and a higher energy of volition, than is wont to belong to man in active life. But fortunately, there is not only in his rational nature, a moral disposition which can be unfolded by the intellect, but an *æsthetic* tendency to it already exists in his sensuo-rational, that is, his human nature, which can be stimulated by certain sensible objects, and cultivated by the purification of his feelings, for this ideal excursion of the mind. At present, I shall proceed from this disposition, which is indeed according to its conception and essence, ideal, but which the realist himself sufficiently manifests in his life, although he does not concede it in his system.\*

It is true, the developed feeling for Beauty already succeeds in making us to a certain extent independent of nature as a force. A mind which has so far ennobled itself, as to be more affected by the form than the subject-matter of things, and, without regard to possession, to create a free satisfaction from mere reflection upon the mode of representation—such a mind bears within itself an internal, indefeasible fullness of life; and since it is not compelled to appropriate the objects, among which it lives, it is not in danger of being deprived of them. But after all, the appearance will still have a corporiety, in which it manifests itself, and so long then, as a need only of beauty in appearance exists, a need remains for the *existence* of objects; and consequently our satisfaction is still independent of nature as a force, which rules over the whole pro-

\* As generally nothing can be truly idealistic, except what the complete realist practises unconsciously, and denies at the expense of consistency.



vince of being. That is—it is something entirely different, whether we feel a desire for fair and good objects, or whether we only desire that the objects already extant should be fair and good. The latter may consist with the highest mental freedom, but not the former; we may *demand* that what exists should be fair and good, but only *wish* that the Fair and the Good would exist. This mental inclination, which is indifferent whether the Fair and Good and Perfect exists, but desires with rigorous severity, that the Existing should be fair and good and perfect, is called pre-eminently great and sublime, since it contains all the realities of a beautiful character, without partaking of its limits.

It is a mark of a good and beautiful, but always of a weak spirit, ever to strive impatiently to realize its moral ideal, and to be sorely tried by the obstacles to this design. Such men throw themselves into a gloomy dependence upon chance, and it may always be predicted with safety, that they concede too much to the material in moral and æsthetic things, and cannot abide the highest test of character and taste. That which is morally faulty should not induce *passivity* and grief, which always evinces an unappeased want rather than an unaccomplished demand. The latter should be accompanied by an *active* emotion, and rather strengthen and confirm the mind in its power, than make it desponding and unhappy.

Nature gave us two guardian spirits for our companions through life. One, familiar and agreeable, wiles away the tedium of the journey by his lively sport, lightens the fetters of necessity, and conducts us with joy and pleasantry to the perilous position where we must act as pure spirits and lay aside everything corporeal—to the cognition of truth and the practice of duty. Here he deserts us, for his province is only the world of sense, and his earth-born pinions cannot bear him out beyond it. But now the other approaches, grave and silent; and bears us with vigorous arm over the dizzy abyss.

We recognise in the first of these spirits, the feeling of

Beauty—in the second, the feeling of Sublimity. It is true, Beauty is an expression of freedom, but not of that, which elevates us above the force of nature and releases us from all corporeal influence—only of that, which we enjoy in the midst of nature as men. We feel ourselves free through Beauty, since the sensuous impulses harmonize with the law of reason; we feel ourselves free through Sublimity, since the sensuous impulses have no influence upon the legislation of the reason, since the spirit acts here, as if it existed under no other laws than its own.

The feeling of sublimity is a mingled feeling. It is a composition of *woffulness*, which in its highest degree appears as horror, and of *joyfulness*, which can amount to transport; and although it is not strictly pleasure, is still far preferred to all pleasure by spirits of refinement. This union of two diverse perceptions in a single feeling, proves incontestably our moral independence. For as it is absolutely impossible, that the same object should stand in two opposite relations to us, it follows hence, that *we ourselves* stand in two different relations to the object—that therefore two opposite natures must be combined in us, which are interested in a manner totally opposite in the representation of this object. We perceive, then, by the feeling of Sublimity, that our spiritual condition is not necessarily moulded according to our sensuous condition, that the laws of nature are not necessarily also our own, and that we possess an independent principle, independent of every sensuous emotion.

The sublimity of an object is of a twofold nature. We either refer it to our *comprehensive power*, and fail in the attempt to form for ourselves an image or conception of it; or we refer it to our *vital power*, and consider it as a force, against which our own sinks into nothing. But although in both cases we sustain the painful feeling, suggested by it, of our own limitations, yet we do not avoid it, but rather are attracted by it with irresistible power. Would this indeed be possible, if the limits of our fancy were at the same time the

limits of our comprehension? Would we indeed fain be reminded of nature's omnipotence, if we had not in reserve something besides what might become her prey? We are delighted at the sensuo-infinite, since we can imagine what the senses no longer embrace and the intellect no longer apprehends. We are inspired by the fearful, since we can will what the impulses abhor, and reject what they desire. We readily leave the imagination to find its master in the realm of phenomena, for, after all, it is only one sensuous power triumphing over another sensuous power; but nature in her whole boundlessness cannot attain to the absolute greatness within ourselves. We readily subject our welfare and existence to physical necessity, for that reminds us, that it has no control over principles. The man is in its power, but the will of man is his own.

And thus nature has employed even a sensuous means, to teach us that we are more than merely sensuous; she thus knew how to take advantage of perceptions, to lead us to the discovery that we are nothing less than slavishly subject to the force of perceptions. And this is an effect entirely different from that which can be accomplished by Beauty; that is, by the Beauty of reality, for even the sublime must lose itself in ideal Beauty. Reason and Sense harmonize under the sway of Beauty, and it possesses attraction for us only on account of this agreement. Then through Beauty alone we should never perceive, that we are able and designed to demonstrate ourselves as pure intelligences. On the contrary, reason and sense do *not* harmonize in the Sublime, and in this very opposition between both lies the magic, whereby it invades our mind. The physical and the moral man are here most rigorously distinguished from each other; for exactly in those objects where the first only feels his limitation, the other experiences his power, and is infinitely exalted by the same thing which humbles the other to the dust.

I will assume that a man should possess all the virtues, whose union constitutes the *beautiful character*. He should find his delight in the exercise of justice, benevolence, temperance,

independence and fidelity; all duties, whose performance is imposed by circumstances, should be his pastime, and prosperity should make no action difficult to him, ever invited to action by his philanthropic heart alone. Who is not transported at this beautiful unison of the native impulses with the prescriptions of reason, and who can refrain from loving such a man? But indeed can we, with all our leaning towards him, be assured that he is actually a virtuous man, and that generally there is virtue? If this man aimed at nothing but agreeable perceptions, he could positively act no otherwise, without being a fool; and to be vicious, he would have to despise his own advantage. It may be that the source of his actions is pure, but he must settle that with his own heart; it is beyond our ken. We see him do nothing more than the merely judicious man must do, who makes pleasure his God. Then the world of sense is adequate to account for the whole phenomenon of his virtue, and we are not compelled to look beyond it for a motive.

But suppose this same man is suddenly plunged into the greatest misfortune. Let one spoil him of his goods, and ruin his fair name; let disease stretch him upon a couch of anguish, and death snatch from him all whom he loves—let all in whom he confided, desert him in his need. Seek him again in this condition, and demand of the unhappy man the exercise of the same virtues in which the happy man had been once so prompt. If we find him at such a crisis exactly the same, if poverty has not diminished his benevolence, ingratitude his obligingness, sorrow his equanimity, or his own adversity his sympathy with the prosperity of others—if we note the change of his circumstances in his appearance, but not in his conduct, in the material, but not in the form of his actions—then indeed we are no longer contented with an explanation from the *conception of nature* (according to which it is absolutely necessary, that the present must be referrible as an effect to something past as its cause), since nothing can be more contradictory than that the same effect should remain, if the cause has changed

into its *opposite*. We must then renounce every natural explanation, must cease entirely to derive the conduct from the condition, and must transfer the former from the immutability of physical laws to a motive entirely different, which, it is true, the reason can attain with its ideas, but the intellect with its conceptions cannot embrace. This discovery of the absolutely moral ability, which depends upon no natural condition, gives to the feeling of wofulness with which we are seized at the sight of such a man, that utterly inexpressible charm, which no pleasure of the senses, however ennobled they may be, can dispute with the Sublime.

Then the Sublime constructs for us a passage from the sensuous world, in which the Beautiful would fain hold us always captive. Not gradually (for there is no transition from dependence to freedom), but suddenly and by a convulsive movement, it tears the self-dependent spirit from the meshes which a refined sensuousness had thrown around it, and which bind the stronger, the more transparently they are spun. If it has triumphed ever so much over a man by the imperceptible influence of an effeminate taste; if it has succeeded, arrayed in the seductive disguise of spiritual Beauty, in forcing itself into the very penetralia of moral legislation, and there poisoning sacred principles at their source — a single sublime emotion is often sufficient to rend asunder this tissue of deceit, to restore at once to the fettered spirit its whole elasticity, to impart a revelation of its true destiny, and to force upon it, at least for a moment, a feeling of its dignity. Beauty under the shape of the goddess Calypso, has fascinated the brave son of Ulysses, and by the might of her attractions, has held him a long time captive in her island. He long imagines that he adores an immortal divinity, while he lies only in the arms of voluptuousness; but a sublime influence invades him suddenly under the shape of *Mentor*; he calls to mind his better destiny, throws himself into the waves, and is free.

The Sublime, like the Beautiful, is lavishly diffused through all nature, and the susceptibility for both is implanted in all

men ; but their germ developes unequally, and must be assisted by Art. It is already a feature in the design of nature, that at first we eagerly hasten after the Beautiful, while we still shun the sublime ; for Beauty is the nurse of our infancy, and should conduct us from our rude state of nature to refinement. But although she is our first love, and our susceptibility for her first unfolds itself, nature has still provided that it should ripen slowly, and await the formation of the intellect and heart. If taste attained its full maturity, before truth and morality had been planted in our hearts, in a way better than taste could give, the sensuous world would for ever remain the limit of our endeavours. We should transcend it neither in our conceptions nor sentiments, and that would have no reality for us which the imagination could not represent. But fortunately it already exists in the tendency of nature, that although the taste blossoms first, it after all attains its maturity only subsequent to all the mental capabilities. Sufficient respite is gained in this interim, to furnish the head copiously with conceptions, and the breast with priceless principles, and then specially to develop from the reason the susceptibility for the great and Sublime.

So long as man was only the slave of physical necessity, and had not yet found an outlet from the narrow circle of exigency, nor divined the lofty *angelic* freedom in his breast, *incomprehensible* nature could only remind him of his limited imagination, and *destructive* nature of his physical weakness. He must then despondingly slight the former, and turn from the other with abhorrence. But free contemplation has hardly given him a foot-hold against the blind encroachment of natural powers, and he has hardly discovered, amid this tide of the apparent, something Permanent in his own being, when the savage masses of nature around him begin to speak far different language to his heart, and external, relative greatness is the mirror, where he sees reflected his internal, absolute greatness. Calmly, and with a pleasing fear, he now approaches these bugbears of his imagination, and purposely summons the whole

strength of this faculty, to set forth the sensuo-infinite, in order that, even if it succumbs in the attempt, he may feel more vividly the superiority of his ideas over the highest that sensuousness can afford. The aspect of boundless distance and immeasurable height, the wide ocean at his feet, and the greater ocean above him, rescue his spirit from the narrow sphere of the actual and the oppressive confinement of physical life. He is presented with a larger unit of measure by the simple majesty of nature, and, surrounded by her noble shapes, his mind no longer brooks the mean and narrow. Who knows how many luminous thoughts or heroic resolves, which no saloon or student's cell would have given to the world, have not sprung from this valorous conflict of the mind with the great spirit of nature, in a single walk? Who knows whether it is not to be ascribed in part to a rarer intercourse with this great genius, that the character of the dweller in cities applies itself so readily to trifles—is stunted and withered—if the sense of the nomad remains open and free as the firmament beneath which he pitches his tent?

But not only that which is unattainable for the imagination, the Sublime of quantity, but also that which is incomprehensible for the intellect, *disorder*, can serve to set forth the supersensuous, and give an impulse to the mind, as soon as it acquires the property of greatness, and announces itself as a work of nature (for otherwise it is contemptible). Who does not rather linger amid the spirited disorder of a natural landscape, than in the insipid regularity of a French garden? Who does not rather admire the wonderful contest between fertility and desolation on the plains of Sicily, and more willingly feast his eyes with the wild cataracts and cloud-peaks of Scotland, than wonder at the meagre triumph of patience over a froward element in starched and formal Holland? No one will deny, that the physical man is better provided for in the meadows of Batavia, than beneath the treacherous crater of Vesuvius, and that a comprehensive and methodical intellect finds its account in a regular kitchen garden, far more than in

a wild, natural landscape. But man has a want beyond his life and welfare, and a better destiny than to comprehend the phenomena that surround him.

That which makes the wild singularity of the physical creation so attractive to the susceptible traveller, opens for an enthusiastic mind, even in the dangerous anarchy of the moral world, the source of a pleasure entirely unique. He, forsooth, who illuminates the great economy of nature with the meagre torch of *intellect*, and for ever plots only to harmonize her bold disorder, can never be satisfied in a world, where insane chance seems to govern rather than a wise plan, and merit and fortune stand in opposition to each other, in by far the majority of cases. He will have everything in the great world-system regulated as in a good hotel, and if he misses, as it cannot otherwise be, this want of conformity, nothing remains for him but to expect, from a future existence and another nature, that satisfaction which is owed to him by the present and past. If, on the contrary, he readily resigns the wish to bring this lawless chaos of phenomena under a unity of cognition, his loss on one side is amply restored on the other. Thus universal deficiency of a designed connexion among this throng of phenomena, whereby they exceed, and become useless to, the intellect, which must adhere to this connective form, is the very thing that makes them a symbol, so much the more striking for the pure reason, which finds its own independence or natural conditions represented in this wild licence of nature. For if we destroy all connexion in a series of things, we have the conception of independence, which coincides surprisingly with the pure rational conception of freedom. Then under this idea of freedom, which the reason obtains out of itself, it embraces in one unity of thought, what the intellect can unite in no unity of cognition—subjects, by this idea, the infinite play of phenomena, and maintains then at the same time, its power over the understanding, as a sensuously conditioned faculty. If we now recollect how a rational being must esteem the consciousness of no independence of the law of nature, we can compre-



hend how it happens, that men of elevated dispositions can regard themselves indemnified by this idea of freedom imparted to them, for all the disappointments of cognition. Freedom in all their moral contradictions and physical evils, is a spectacle for noble minds, infinitely more interesting than welfare and regularity without freedom, where the sheep patiently follow the shepherd, and the self-ruling will is degraded into the subservient fragment of a machine. The latter makes man only an animated product and prosperous citizen of nature; freedom makes him a citizen and co-ruler of a higher system, where it is infinitely more noble to occupy the lowest place, than to lead the series in the physical plan.

Considered from this point of view, and *only* from this, universal history is a sublime spectacle to me. The world, as an historical object, is in fact only the conflict of the powers of nature among themselves and with man's freedom, and history acquaints us with the results of this contest. So far as history has hitherto attained, it has far greater deeds to relate of nature (which includes every human emotion) than of the abstract reason; and the latter has been able to assert its power only by isolated exceptions to nature's law, in a Cato, Aristides, Phœon, and men of like stamp. If we only approach history with a great expectation of light and knowledge, how signally are we deceived! Every well-meant effort of philosophy, to harmonize that which the moral world *demand*s, with that which the actual *affords*, is falsified by the testimony of experience; and nature equals the courtesy with which she directs or seems to direct herself, in her *organic realm*, according to the regulative principles of criticism, by the lawlessness with which, in the realm of freedom, she casts off the restraint that the speculative spirit would fain impose upon her.

How entirely different, if we desist from *explaining* her and receive her incomprehensibility as the stand-point for criticism. The very circumstance that nature, considered in the mass, derides all the rules that our understanding prescribes to her—that, in her free, capricious gate, she tramples in the dust with

like indifference the creations of wisdom and of chance—that she hurries along to one ruin, the important as well as the insignificant, the noble as well as the common—that, here, she sustains an ant-hill, there, embraces and crushes in her giant arms, man, her lordliest creation—that, in a wanton hour, she often dissipates her most hardly-won acquisitions, and often expends centuries upon a work of folly—in a word—this defection of nature, as a totality, from the cognitive rules to which she is subject in her single modes, evinces the absolute impossibility of explaining nature herself *by the laws of nature*, and of applying to her realm, the laws that are valid *within* it; the mind, then, is irresistibly impelled from the actual into the ideal world, from the conditional into the absolute.

A terrific and destructive nature controls us much further than one that wears a sensuo-infinite aspect, that is, so long as we remain only her free observers. Indeed, the sensuous man and the sensuousness in the rational man, fear nothing so much as to fall out with this force, whose sway extends over welfare and existence.

The highest ideal to which we aspire is, to preserve a good understanding with the physical world, as the guardian of our prosperity, without being thereby compelled to break with the moral world, which determines our dignity. But, as all our knowledge teaches, it is ever impossible to serve both masters; and even if duty (a case almost impossible) should never clash with exigency, still natural necessity, enters into no compact with man, and neither his power nor his dexterity can secure him against the tricks of fortune. Well for him, then, if he has learned to endure what he cannot alter, and to resign with dignity what he cannot preserve! Cases may occur, when fate storms all the outworks on which he relied for security, and when nothing remains for him but to take refuge in the inviolability of spiritual freedom; when there are no other means to pacify the native impulse, than to will so—and no other method of withstanding the force of nature, than by anticipating it, and by a free surrender of all sensuous interests,

dying by his own moral force before he falls a victim to physical force.

He is strengthened for this purpose by sublime emotions, and a more frequent communion with destructive nature, as well there, where she only shows to him from afar her ruinous might, as where she actually displays it against his fellow-man. Pathos is an artistic misfortune, which, like genuine misfortune, places us in *immediate contact* with the spiritual law that reigns in our breast. But genuine misfortune does not always choose well its man and its time; it often surprises us defenceless, and, what is still worse, it often *makes* us defenceless. On the contrary, the artistic misfortune of Pathos finds us completely armed, and since it is only feigned, the self-dependent principle within us wins space to maintain its absolute independence. Now the oftener that the spirit renews this act of spontaneity, the more facility will it acquire, and a greater advantage over the sensuous impulse, so that finally, even if a feigned and artistic misfortune becomes a serious one, it is prepared to treat it as artistic, and to dissolve genuine sorrow in a sublime emotion—which is the highest effort of human nature. Then we may say that Pathos is an inoculation of inexorable fate, whereby it is robbed of its malignity, and its attack is shifted to the stronger side of man.

Away then with the mistaken forbearance and the weakly pampered taste, which casts a veil over the grave countenance of necessity, and in order to find favour with the senses, *counterfeits* a harmony between *well-being* and *well-doing*, of which no traces are manifest in the actual world. Let the evil relation confront us face to face. There is salvation for us, not in an ignorance of the perils which beleaguer us—for this cannot always be maintained—but in an *acquaintance* with them. We are aided in forming this acquaintance by the fearfully magnificent spectacle of all-destroying, re-producing, and again destroying mutation—of ruin, now slowly undermining, now suddenly invading—by the pathetic pictures of humanity yielding in the struggle with destiny, of the in-

cessant flight of prosperity, of betrayed security, of triumphant injustice and of prostrate innocence, which history furnishes abundantly, and which tragic art brings with imitative skill before our eyes. For where is the man with a moral disposition not utterly neglected, who can linger amid such scenes as the stubborn yet fruitless struggle of Mithridates, the downfall of Syracuse and Carthage, without doing shuddering homage to the stern law of necessity, without instantly curbing his desires, and, invaded by this eternal falsity of all the Sensuous, grasping at the permanent within his breast? Then the capacity for perceiving the Sublime is one of the noblest tendencies of human nature, which as well merits our *respect* for its origin from the self-acting faculty of *thought* and *will*, as it deserves the fullest development, on account of its influence upon the moral man. Beauty only recommends itself to *man*, the Sublime to the *pure δαίμων* within him; and since after all we are destined to govern ourselves in every sensuous limitation according to the code of pure spirit, the Sublime must be added to the Beautiful, in order to complete the totality of *æsthetic culture*, and to extend the susceptibility of the human heart to the whole circumference of our destiny—consequently beyond the world of sense.

Without Beauty there would be lasting strife between our natural and our purely rational destiny. We should neglect our *humanity* in the endeavour to satisfy our *spirituality*, and, every moment prepared for a disruption from the world of sense, should constantly remain aliens in the sphere of action once for all assigned to us. Beauty without Sublimity would lead us to forget our dignity. We should mar the vigour of *character* in the enervation of an uninterrupted enjoyment, and should lose sight of our unalterable destiny and our true fatherland, while indissolubly bound to this *contingent form of being*. Only if Sublimity is wedded to Beauty, and our susceptibility for both is equally developed, are we finished citizens of nature, without consequently being her slaves, and without forfeiting our citizenship in the world of intelligence.

It is true, nature already exhibits for herself alone a crowd of objects, which might exercise the susceptibility for the Sublime and Beautiful: but man here, as in other cases, is better served at second than at first hand, and prefers to receive a subject selected and prepared by art, rather than to draw scantily and painfully from the impure sources of nature. The imitative plastic impulse, which can permit no *impression*, without immediately striving after a lively *expression*, and which sees in every great or beautiful form of nature a challenge to wrestle with her, has the great advantage over the latter, of being permitted to treat as the chief design and a proper whole, that which nature—if she does not quite aimlessly reject—yet only undertakes by the way, during the prosecution of a more contiguous design. If nature *suffers violence* in her fair organic creations, either by the imperfect individuality of substance or by the operation of heterogeneous powers, or if she *exercises violence* in her great and pathetic scenes, and acts as a force upon man, although she can become æsthetic only when an object of *free* contemplation, yet her imitator, creative art, is completely free, because she abstracts all contingent limitations from her object, and leaves the mind of the beholder free, because she imitates only the *show* and not the *reality*. But as the whole enchantment of the Sublime and Beautiful consists only in the show and not in the contents, art has every advantage over nature, without sharing her fetters.\*

\* (Tr.)—Jean Paul, in his *Vorschule der Ästhetik*, seems to dissent from Schiller as to the question, in what does Sublimity consist? Though Jean Paul has upon this subject, as upon every other, no severely defined system, and sometimes imagines instead of determines, yet his remarks are notable, and also appropriate here. After stating that Kant, and after him, Schiller, make the Sublime to consist in an Infinite, which sense and imagination fail to give and comprehend, but which the Reason creates and retains—he says: “But the Sublime, for example, a sea, a high mountain,

cannot be beyond the limits of the senses, because they embrace that *in which* the Sublime first dwells (conceptions of Time and Space): the same is true of the imagination which previously constructs, in its infinite wastes and aether-heights, the infinite Space for the Sublime pyramids. Further, it is true that the Sublime is always joined with a sensuous *symbol* (in or out of us), but this often lays no claim at all to the powers of fancy and of sense. So, for example, in that oriental poem where the prophet awaits a token that the Divinity is passing by, who was not in the fire, nor in the thunder, nor in the whirlwind, but who comes at last in a soft, low voice, the tranquil symbol is evidently more sublime than one which is majestic. So æsthetic sublimity of action stands in an inverse relation to the importance of the sensuous symbol—and only the smallest is sublimest; in this case Jupiter's eye-brows move more sublimely than his arm or than himself.

“Further, Kant divides the Sublime into mathematical and dynamical, or as Schiller expresses it, into that which exceeds our comprehensive ability, and that which threatens our life. Briefly, it might be called the Quantitative and the Qualitative, or the external and the internal. But the eye can never make intuition of any other than a quantitative sublimity; no intuition, but only a conclusion from experience, can give to an abyss, a stormy sea, a sliding cliff, dynamical sublimity. How then is intuition made of such? By the *ear*, which is the direct ambassador of power and of horror—as in the thunder of clouds, of the ocean, of cataracts, the roaring of lions, &c. A man without any empirical knowledge will tremble at audible greatness; but every example of visible greatness would only raise and expand him.

“If I define the Sublime as *related infinity*, there is a fivefold, or also a threefold division to be made; that related to the eye (the mathematical or optical Sublime)—to the ear (the dynamical or audible)—then the imagination must refer the infinity again to its own quantitative and qualitative sensuousness, as boundlessness,\* and as divinity—and then there is still the third or fifth Sublimity, which manifests itself exactly in an inverse relation to the external or internal sensuous symbol—namely, the moral or active Sublime.

“Now how does the Infinite become related precisely to a

\* Eternity is a mathematical or optical Sublimity for the imagination; or thus—Time is the infinite line, Eternity the infinite surface, Divinity the dynamical fulness.

sensuous object, if the latter, as I have shown, is less than the capacity of sense and imagination? The enormous leap from the sensuous as symbol into the supersensuous as the symbolised—which Pathognomy and Physiognomy must make every moment—is made possible only by nature, and by no mediate idea; for example, between the mimic expression of hatred, and hatred itself—nay, between word and idea, there is no equation. But the conditions must be found, under which one sensuous object is preferable to another as a spiritual symbol. The ear requires both extension and intension: the tone of thunder must be prolonged as well as loud. As we can make intuition of no power but our own, and as voice is, so to speak, the *parole* of life, it is evident why the ear designates the Sublime of power. And a rapid comparison of our own tones with foreign ones is not thereby to be entirely excluded. Even silence may be Sublime; as that of a bird of prey floating silently—the calm before a tempest—and that between the lightning and the thunder.

“Many cases present themselves for investigation: for example, those in which the different kinds of the Sublime are combined—as the waterfall, which is both mathematically and dynamically great—so also a tempestuous sea. Another point is, what relation does this related infinity of Nature bear to the infinity of Art—since the imagination refers to the reason in both? Then there are many objections to the Kantian principle of ‘pain at every Sublimity;’ especially this, that according to Kant, the greatest Sublime, that is, God, must give the greatest pain; and so to the other Kantian proposition, that after the Sublime everything is little, it may be objected, that there are degrees even of Sublimity, not as infinite, but as related; for example, a clear starlight over a sleeping sea does not so mightily elevate the soul, as a storm-heaven with its storm-sea,—and God is more Sublime than a mountain.”

For a further exposition of Schiller’s theory of the Sublime, see the second part of the Essay upon Various Æsthetic Subjects—entitled, “Æsthetic Estimation of Size.”

THOUGHTS  
UPON THE USE OF  
THE COMMON AND LOW  
IN ART.





## THE COMMON AND LOW.

EVERYTHING is *Common* which does not address the spirit, and which excites only a sensuous interest. It is true, there are a thousand things which are previously common in the matter or content : but since the common in matter can be ennobled by the treatment it receives, we speak in Art only of the common in form. An ordinary man will disgrace the noblest material by an ordinary treatment : on the contrary, a great head and a refined spirit knows how to ennoble the common itself, because he connects it with something spiritual, and exposes its most favourable side. Thus an historian of the common stamp, will inform us as solicitously of his hero's most insignificant affairs as of his noblest deeds, and dwell as long upon his pedigree, dress, and domestic economy, as upon his schemes and undertakings. He will so relate his greatest deeds, that no man will take them for what they are. On the other hand, an historian of genius and enlarged capacity will infuse even into the private life and the indifferent actions of his hero an interest and capacity which makes them notable. In creative art the Flemish painters have an ordinary taste ; the Italians, but still more, the Greeks, a great and noble taste. The latter continually sought the ideal, rejected every common trait, and selected too no common material.

A portrait painter can treat his subject in a style both *Common* and *Great* ; *Common*, if he sets forth the *contingent* as carefully as the necessary, if he neglects the great, and solicitously bring out the little ; *Great*, if he knows how to discover

the *most interesting* traits, separating the accidental from the necessary, bringing out the great and only indicating the little. But nothing is *Great*, except the expression of soul in actions, features and positions.

A poet treats his subject in a common way, if he brings out unimportant actions and passes hastily over the important. He treats it in a great way, if he unites it with the Great. Homer knew how to give a spirited treatment to the shield of Achilles, although the material fabrication of a shield is something very common.

The *Low* stands yet one degree below the common, and is distinguished from it by the fact, that it indicates not only something *negative*, not only a want of the spiritual and noble, but something *positive*—namely, rudeness of feeling, bad manners and degraded sentiments. The Common only springs from an absent superiority which is desirable, the Low from the deficiency of a quality, which may be required of both. For example, revenge, *wherever* it is to be found, and *however* it may be displayed, is in itself something common, since it manifests a want of magnanimity.

But we make a particular distinction of a *low* revenge, if the man who exercises it, uses disgraceful means to satisfy it. The low always indicates something coarse and clownish, but even a man of birth and better manners may think and act in a common way, if he possesses moderate gifts. A man acts in a *common* way who only thinks of his own interest, and so far he is the opposite of the *noble* man, who can forget himself, in order to create enjoyment for another. But the former would act in a low way, if he prosecuted his interest at the expense of his honour, without ever respecting the laws of propriety. The common, then, is opposed to the noble; the low, at the same time to the noble and the proper. To yield to every passion unresistingly, to satisfy every impulse, without even acknowledging the restraint of decorum, much less of morality, is low, and betrays an abject soul.

In works of art also, the *low* may be *apparent*, not only by

selecting low objects, which a sense of fitness and propriety forbids, but also by *treating them in a low way*. We so treat an object, either if we render that side conspicuous which propriety demands should be concealed, or if we give it an expression which suggests low, accessory representations. Low incidents occur in the life of the greatest man, but only a low taste would select and portray them.

We find scriptural paintings, where the apostle, the Virgin and Christ himself have an expression, as if they had been selected from the commonest rabble. All such productions evince a low taste, which justifies us in inferring a rude and vulgar mind in the artist himself.

There are cases, it is true, where even in art the low may be allowed; there, namely, where its object is to excite laughter. Even a man of refinement may sometimes divert himself with the rude but true expressions of nature, and with the contrast between the manners of the polite and vulgar, without betraying a depraved taste. The intoxication of a man of rank, wherever it occurred, would excite disgust; but we laugh at drunken postillions, sailors, and barrow-men. Jests, which would be insupportable in an educated man, divert us in the mouth of the rabble. Many scenes of Aristophanes are of this kind, which however sometimes transgress these limits, and become utterly despicable. For this reason we are amused with Parodies, in which sentiments, expressions and exploits of the common people are palmed off upon people of quality, and treated by the poet with all possible propriety and dignity. As soon as the poet only aims at creating a laughing-stock, and only wishes to divert us, we may overlook all that is low, but he must not excite aversion or disgust.

He excites aversion, if he introduces the low where we cannot possibly tolerate it—in men, namely, from whom we are justified in expecting better manners. If he treats his subject not in accordance with this, he offends either the *truth*, since we should prefer to esteem him a deceiver, than believe that men of culture could really act in so low a way; or his men

offend our moral feeling, and what is still worse, excite our indignation. It is quite another thing in *Farce*, as there is an implied agreement between the author and the audience, so that no one has any expectation of truth. In a *Farce* we absolve the author from all *fidelity in delineation*, and he gets, as it were, a privilege to deceive us. For the Comic is founded upon its very contrast with truth; but it could not possibly exist at the same time as truth and as contrast.

But there are a few cases even in the serious and tragic, where the low may be introduced. Yet then it must pass over into the *fearful*, and the momentary offence of taste must be counteracted by a powerful employment of emotion, and become, as it were, swallowed up by a deeply tragical effect. Theft, for example, is something absolutely *low*, and whatever apology for the thief our heart may suggest, however much he may have been impelled by the force of circumstances, still an indelible mark is stamped upon him, and æsthetically considered, he always remains a low object. Here taste pardons still less than morality, and its tribunal is more severe, since an æsthetic object is answerable also for all the accessory ideas which it suggests to us; as on the other hand, everything contingent is abstracted by a moral criticism. Therefore a man who steals, will be a most despicable object for any poetical representation with a serious content. But if the man is a *murderer* at the same time, he is to be sure, still more despicable *morally*, but he is a degree more tolerable *æsthetically*. He who debases himself by a deed of *infamy* (I only speak now of things æsthetically considered) may be somewhat re-elevated and re-established in our *æsthetic* regard, by a *crime*. This divergence of the moral from the æsthetic judgment is remarkable, and merits attention. We might adduce many causes for it. In the first place, I have already said, that since the æsthetic judgment depends upon the fancy, all accessory representations also, which are excited by an object, and stand in natural connexion with it, influence this judgment. If now these accessory representations are of a low

kind, they inevitably degrade the principal object whence they result:

Secondly, in an æsthetic criticism we regard *power*, in a moral criticism, *conformity to law*. Want of power is something contemptible, and equally so is every action, which leaves us to infer it. Every base and cowardly deed is repugnant to us by the want of power which it betrays; and inversely a diabolical act may please us *æsthetically*, as soon as it only evinces power. But a theft shows a base and cowardly disposition—a murder has at least the show of power; and that degree of interest which, æsthetically, we take in the act, corresponds to the degree of power developed by it.

Thirdly, a heinous and terrible crime diverts our attention from its quality, and directs it to its fearful *result*. The stronger mental emotion suppresses then the weaker. We do not look back into the soul of the criminal, but forward to his fate, and to the effects of his act. As soon as we begin to *tremble*, all delicacy of taste is hushed. The main impression entirely occupies our soul, and abolishes the accessory ideas, to which the low particularly belongs. Hence the theft of young Rubberg, in the *Crime of Ambition*, is not repulsive upon the stage, but truly tragical. The author has managed the circumstances so dexterously, that we are hurried along without a breathing space. The fearful misery of his family, and particularly the sorrow of his father, are objects which draw our whole attention from the criminal to the results of his deed. We are far too much affected, to admit the representation of the infamy, with which the theft is branded. In short—the low is concealed by the *fearful*. It is curious, that this theft of young Rubberg, actually perpetrated, is not so repulsive, as the mere groundless suspicion of a theft in another play, where a young officer is undeservedly accused of having stolen a silver spoon, which is afterwards found. Here then the low is only imagined, a mere suspicion, and yet it does an irretrievable injury, in our æsthetic representation, to the innocent hero of the piece. The reason is, because the supposition that a man could act in

a low way, evinces no very stable opinion of his morals, as conventional laws require that one should be considered an honest man so long as he does not *manifest* the contrary. If then we couple anything contemptible with him, it seems as if he had some time or other given a pretext for the possibility of such suspicion; although what is low in an unmerited suspicion, pertains properly to the accuser. In the play alluded to, the injury done to the hero is increased, since he is an officer, and in love with a lady of rank and culture. With both these predicates, the predicate of theft makes a woful contrast, and it is impossible, if he is with his fair lady, not to recollect for a moment that he might have the silver spoon in his pocket. The greatest misfortune is that he never guesses the suspicion resting upon him; for were this the case, he would, as an officer, demand a bloody satisfaction. Then the results would pass over into the fearful, and the low would disappear.

Still we must accurately distinguish the low in disposition from the low in action. The first is *beneath* æsthetic dignity, the last may often very well agree with it. *Slavery* is low, but a slavish disposition in freedom is contemptible; on the contrary, a slavish occupation without such a disposition is not so; rather may lowness of condition, united with grandeur of disposition, pass into Sublimity. The master of Epictetus, who chastised him, acted in a low way, and the beaten slave evinced an elevated soul. True greatness beams from a lowly lot all the more nobly, and the artist need not fear to represent his hero with a mean outside, if he is only assured, that the expression of internal worth is at his bidding.

But that which may be permitted to the poet, is not always allowable to the painter. The former brings his object only before the fancy; the latter, on the other hand, immediately before the senses. Thus the impression of a painting is not only more lively than that of a poem, but the painter also cannot make the internal so apparent by his natural signs, as the poet can by his arbitrary signs, and yet the internal alone

can reconcile us with its external development. If Homer represents his Ulysses in beggar's rags, it depends upon us how far we carry out this image, and how long we dwell upon it; but in no case has it sufficient liveliness of colouring, to become unpleasant or disgusting to us. But if the painter or even the dramatist should imitate faithfully Homer's Ulysses, we should turn from it with repugnance. In this case we do not have the force of the impression in our own power; we *must* see what the painter shows us, and we cannot so easily ignore the disagreeable accessory ideas, which are thus brought to our remembrance.





DISCONNECTED  
O B S E R V A T I O N S  
UPON VARIOUS  
ÆSTHETIC SUBJECTS.



## VARIOUS ÆSTHETIC SUBJECTS.

ALL qualities of things, which make them æsthetic, are comprehended under four classes, which, according to their *objective* difference, as well as according to their different *subjective* relation, produce for our passivity or activity, a satisfaction different not only in *strength*, but also in *value*, and are also unequally adapted for the purpose of the fine arts. These classes are, the Agreeable, the Good, the Sublime, and the Beautiful. Of these the sublime and beautiful alone are *proper* for art. The agreeable is not *worthy* of it, and the good is at least not its *design*; for the design of art is to please, and the good, whether theoretical or practical, can and need not be subservient to sensuousness.

The agreeable satisfies only the *senses*, and is to be distinguished from the good, which pleases the pure reason. It pleases by its content, for the sense can only be affected by matter, and all that is form can only please the reason.

It is true, the *beautiful* pleases through the medium of the senses, in which it differs from the good, but it pleases the reason by its form, in which it differs from the agreeable. The good, we may say, pleases by a pure form that is *according to reason*, the beautiful by a form that is *similar to reason*, the agreeable by no form at all. The good is *thought*, the beautiful *regarded*, the agreeable only *felt*. The first pleases in idea, the second in contemplation, the third in material perception.

We are particularly struck by the difference between the

good and the agreeable. The good enlarges our cognition, since it creates and supposes a conception of its object; the ground of our satisfaction lies in the object, although the satisfaction is itself a condition, in which we find ourselves. On the contrary, the agreeable produces no cognition of its object, and is founded upon none. It is only agreeable because it is perceived, and its conception entirely vanishes, as soon as we lose by reflection the susceptibility of the senses, or only divert it to another object. A warm breeze is agreeable to a man, who feels the cold; but the same man will seek a cooling shade in the heat of summer. But we allow that he has rightly judged in both cases. The *objective* is completely independent of *us*, and what to-day appears to us true, proper, and rational, will (supposing that we have judged rightly to-day) appear the same after twenty years. Our judgment concerning the agreeable varies, according as our position alters with reference to its object. It is then, no property of the object, but first results from the relation of an object to our senses—for its necessary condition is the nature of our sense.

The good, on the contrary, is already good before it is represented and perceived. The property by which it pleases, exists completely for itself, without any necessity for our subject, although our satisfaction at it rests upon a susceptibility of our being. The agreeable, we may say, *is* only, because it is *perceived*; the good, on the contrary, is *perceived*, because it *is*.

We are less struck by the difference between the beautiful and the agreeable, however great it may be. The former resembles the agreeable in this, that it must always be presented to the senses, that it pleases only empirically. It further resembles it in neither creating nor supposing any cognition drawn from its object. But again, it is very distinct from the agreeable, since it pleases by the *form* of its actual mode, not by the material perception. It is true, it pleases the rational Subject, only so far as that is at the same time sensuous; but it also only pleases the sensuous, so far as that is at the same

time rational. It not only pleases the individual but the genus, and although it maintains an existence only by its relation to sensuo-rational nature, it is still independent of all empirical determinations of sensuousness, and remains the same, even if the private constitution of the Subject has altered. Then the beautiful has in common with the good, that in which it differs from the agreeable, and departs from the good, just where it approaches the agreeable.

Under the good is to be comprehended that, in which the reason recognises a conformity to its laws, whether theoretical or practical. But the same object may fully harmonize with the theoretical reason, and yet be entirely repugnant to the practical. We may dislike the purpose of an undertaking, and yet admire its aptness for that purpose. We may despise the enjoyments which the voluptuary makes the aim of life, and yet praise the strict consequences of his principles and his wisdom in the choice of means. What pleases us only by its form, is good, and it is absolutely and unconditionally good, if its form is at the same time its content. The good is also an object of perception, but of no direct perception, like the agreeable, and of no mixed perception, like the beautiful. It does not stimulate desire like the former, or inclination like the latter. The pure representation of the good can only inspire regard.

It is obvious from the fixed distinction between the agreeable, the good and the beautiful, that an object may be ugly, imperfect, and even morally exceptionable, and still be agreeable—still please the senses; that an object can be revolting to the sense, and yet be good—yet please the reason; that an object may be revolting in its internal quality, to the moral feeling, and still please in contemplation—still be beautiful. The reason is, that in all these various exhibitions another faculty of the mind is interested, and in a different manner.

But the classification of æsthetic predicates is not exhausted with the above, for there are objects, which are at the same time ugly, repugnant, and dreadful to the sense, dissatisfactory

to the intellect, and indifferent in a moral estimation, and which still please—nay, please to such a high degree, that we readily sacrifice the gratification of sense and of reason, in order to procure its enjoyment.

Nothing in nature is more enchanting than a beautiful landscape in the red of evening. The rich manifoldness and mild outline of shapes, the infinitely varying play of light, the delicate veil which envelopes distant objects—all combine to charm our senses. Perhaps the soft murmur of a waterfall, the melody of nightingales, and pleasant music are added to increase our pleasure. We are dissolved in sweet perception of tranquillity, and while our senses are affected most agreeably by the harmony of colours, shapes and tones, the mind revels in an easy and spirited flow of ideas, and the heart in the current of its feelings.

Suddenly a storm arises, which darkens the sky and the whole landscape, which surpasses and drowns all other sounds, and suddenly deprives us of all our pleasures. Clouds, black as pitch, encircle the horizon, deafening thunder-claps descend, flash follows flash, and our sight as well as hearing is most disagreeably affected. The lightning only shines to render the frightful night more apparent; we see it as it strikes—nay, we begin to tremble lest it may strike us also. Yet not the less do we believe, that we have rather gained than lost by the change, those persons excepted, whom fear deprives of all freedom of judgment. We are powerfully attracted in one direction by this fearful spectacle, which repels our senses, and linger in it with a feeling, which indeed we cannot properly call *pleasure*, but which is often far superior to pleasure. But now this spectacle of nature is rather *destructive* than *good* (at least we are not obliged to regard the utility of a tempest, in order to find pleasure in such a phenomenon), it is ugly rather than beautiful, for darkness, as a deprivation of all the appearances which light creates, can never be pleasing; and the sudden shattering of the air by the thunder, and its sudden illumination by the lightning, contradict a necessary condition

of all Beauty, which admits nothing abrupt, nothing violent. Further, this phenomenon is rather painful than agreeable to mere sense, since the nerves of sight and of hearing are painfully strained, and then just as violently relaxed, by the sudden alternations of darkness and light—from the roar of the thunder to silence. And notwithstanding all these causes of displeasure, a tempest is an attractive appearance for one who does not fear it.

Still further. In the midst of a green and smiling plain, a rude and naked hillock is prominent, which shuts out from the eye a part of the prospect. Every one will wish this excrescence removed, as something which disfigures the beauty of the whole landscape. Now let one imagine this hillock to become higher and higher, without in the least altering its form in other respects, so that the same relation is preserved between its breadth and height. At first our dissatisfaction at it will increase, since its increasing bulk only makes it more obtrusive, more troublesome. But proceed to magnify it to double the height of a tower, and our dissatisfaction at it insensibly disappears, and gives place to a feeling entirely different. Finally, when it has risen so high, that it is almost impossible for the eye to embrace it in a single image, it is more esteemed by us than all the beautiful plain around it, and we should unwillingly exchange the impression which it produces, for another however fair. Now let one give in idea such an inclination to this mountain, that it appears every moment as if it would fall over, then our previous feeling is mingled with that of terror, but the object itself will be all the more attractive. But suppose, that we could prop up this inclined mountain by another, then the terror, and with it a great part of our pleasure, would be lost. Suppose further, that we placed near this mountain four or five others, each of which should be a fourth or fifth part lower than its neighbour, then the first feeling which was inspired by its magnitude would be evidently diminished; something similar would occur, if we should divide the mountain itself into ten or twelve equal fragments, or if we



adorned it by ingenious additions. In the first instance, our only process was, to *increase* the mountain, exactly as it was, without altering its form—and by this single circumstance it was changed from an indifferent, even a repulsive, object, to one of pleasure. In our second process, we changed this great object at the same time into an object of terror, and thereby increased our pleasure at its aspect. In the last process undertaken, we diminished the terrific quality of its appearance, and thereby weakened the pleasure. We have lessened *subjectively* the representation of its greatness, partly by dividing the attention of the eye, partly by creating for it a measure of comparison in the smaller mountains placed near by, whereby it could more easily command the greatness of the largest. Then *greatness* and *fearfulness* can in certain cases suffice, in themselves alone, as a source of pleasure.

There is no image in the Grecian Mythology more fearful and at the same time more revolting than the Furies or Erinyes, when they ascend from Orcus to punish a criminal. A ghastly, withered visage, haggard figures, heads wreathed with serpents instead of hair, disgust our senses as much as they offend our taste. But when these monsters are represented as they haunt Orestes the matricide, shaking torches in their hands, and hunting him restlessly from place to place, till finally, when indignant justice is appeased, vanishing in the abyss of hell, we linger amid this representation with an agreeable horror. But it is not only the remorse of a criminal, which is personified by the Furies, that can please us when represented, but his unlawful deeds themselves, his real actus. Clytemnestra, the Medea of the Greek tragedy, who murdered her husband—Orestes, who killed his mother, fill our mind with a shuddering delight. Even in common life, we discover that indifferent, and even revolting and horrible objects, begin to interest us, as soon as they approach either the *monstrous* or the *terrible*. A very common and insignificant man begins to please us, when a violent passion, which does not in the

least elevate him in our estimation, converts him into an object of fear and terror; just as a common and paltry object is a source of pleasure to us, as soon as we magnify it till it threatens to transgress our powers of comprehension. A disagreeable man becomes still more disagreeable through anger, and yet he may have the greatest attraction for us during an outbreak of that passion, when it does not run into the ridiculous but into the fearful. This remark is applicable even in the case of animals. A bull in the plough, a horse in the cart, a dog, are common objects; but if we goad the bull into fight, throw the peaceful horse into a rage, or if we see a *mad* dog, we elevate these animals into æsthetic objects, and begin to regard them with a feeling which partakes of satisfaction and regard. The universal bias of all men towards emotion, the power of sympathetic feeling, which impels us *in nature* to the spectacle of sorrow, fear, and horror, which attracts us *in art* so strongly, which charms us in the theatre, and exercises our taste so extensively in the delineations of great misfortunes—all this is indicative of a *fourth source of pleasure*, which neither the Agreeable, the Good, nor the Beautiful are competent to create.

All the examples hitherto adduced have in common something objective in the perception they excite in us. We perceive in all an exhibition of something, “which either *transgresses*, or threatens to do so, our sensuous comprehension or our sensuous resistance,” yet without pushing this superiority so far as to oppress both those powers, or to diminish our exertions for cognition or for resistance. On the one hand, a manifoldness is bestowed upon us, to comprehend which in unity, forces our intuitive faculty to its limits. On the other, a power is exhibited, against which our own disappears, but which we are still compelled to accommodate to the latter. It is either an object, which at the same time offers itself to, and *withdraws* itself from, our intuitive faculty, and rouses the effort for representation without letting it hope for satisfaction; or it is an object, which seems to take a hostile attitude against our *being* itself, challenges us, as it were, to conflict, and

excites solicitude for the result. The same operation upon the perceptive faculty is also evident in all the cases adduced. All throw the mind into a state of restless emotion and intensity. A certain gravity, which may amount to solemnity, occupies our souls; and while evident traces of anxiety are manifest in the sensuous organs, the reflecting spirit sinks back into itself, and seems to rely upon an elevated consciousness of its independent power and dignity. This consciousness must actually predominate, if the great or the terrible would have for us an æsthetic value. Since the mind is inspired by such exhibitions, and feels itself raised above itself, we distinguish them by the epithet *Sublime*, although nothing sublime pertains objectively to the objects themselves, on which account it would be more appropriate to style them *elevating*.

An object, to be called sublime, must *be opposed* to our sensuous faculties. Two different relations may be imagined in which things can stand to our sensuousness, and corresponding to these there must also be two different modes of opposition. They are either regarded as objects, from which we would create a cognition, or as *a force*, with which we measure our own. According to this distribution there are also two species of the sublime, the sublime of cognition and the sublime of power.

But the sensuous faculties contribute nothing further towards cognition, except as they comprehend the given substance, and arrange together its manifoldness in time and space. To distinguish and assort this manifoldness is the business of the intellect, not of the imagination. *Diversity* is only for the intellect—*homogeneousness* only for the imagination (as sense), and then it is only the mass of the homogeneous (the quantity not the quality) that can make a distinction in the sensuous appropriation of phenomena. Should then the sensuous representative faculty succumb to an object, this object must exceed the imagination through its quantity. Therefore the sublime of cognition depends upon number or bulk, and for this reason it can also be called the mathematical sublime.

## ÆSTHETIC ESTIMATION OF SIZE.

I CAN make four, entirely different, representations of the quantity of an object.

The tower, which I see before me, is a great object.

It is four hundred feet high.

It is high.

It is a lofty (sublime) object.

It is evident, that something entirely distinct is declared by each of these four predicates, which still collectively relate to the quantity of the tower. In the two first, the tower is regarded only as a *Quantum* (a greatness), in the two remaining, as a *Magnum* (as something great).

Everything made up of parts is a Quantum. Each intuition, each intellectual conception has a magnitude, as certainly as the latter has a sphere and the former a content. Then quantity cannot generally be meant, if, in speaking of objects we regard a difference of magnitude. The reference here is to such a quantity, as especially pertains to an object—that is, one that is not only a *Quantum*, but at the same time a *Magnum*.

In every magnitude we suppose an unity, to which many homogeneous parts are allied. If then a distinction would obtain between magnitude and magnitude, it can only consist in this, that in the one more parts, in the other less parts, are united to an unity, or that the one composes only one part in the other. That Quantum, which contains in itself another Quantum as part, is a *Magnum* in comparison with this Quantum.

To examine how often a definite Quantum is contained in another, is called *measuring*, this Quantum (if it is continuous—*stetig*), or *counting* it (if it is not continuous.) It always depends then upon the unity which is taken as a measure of comparison, whether we regard an object as a *Magnum*: that is to say, all conception of magnitude is relative.

Considered with reference to its measure, every magnitude is a Magnum, and still more so with reference to the measure of its measure, compared with which the latter is itself a Magnum. But as it descends, it also ascends. Every Magnum is small, as soon as we propose to contain it in another; and what limit is there to this, since we can multiply again with itself every amount, however great?

Then in the process of measurement we can hit upon the *comparative*, to be sure, but never upon the *absolute* magnitude, namely, upon that which can be contained in no other Quantum, but which embraces in itself all other magnitudes. Certainly nothing would hinder the same intellectual operation, which renders to us such a magnitude, from also giving it to us *in duplo*, since the intellect proceeds successively, and, guided by conceptions of number, can push forward its synthesis to infinity. So long as it continues to define *how great* an object is, the object is not yet (absolutely) great, and may by the same method of comparison be degraded to a very small one. According to this, there could be in nature only a single magnitude per excellenciam, namely, the infinite entirety of nature itself, but to which no intuition can correspond, and whose synthesis can never be completed in time. As the empire of numbers is inexhaustible, the intellect must be that which terminates its synthesis; and it must everywhere set up an unity as the extreme and highest measure, and declare to be absolutely great, whatever exceeds it.

This actually takes place, if I say of the tower which I see before me, *it is high*, without *defining*, its height. I here give no measure of comparison, and yet I cannot ascribe absolute greatness to the tower, as nothing hinders me from assuming it to be still greater. Then at the mere aspect of the tower an extreme measure must already be given to me, and I must be able to conceive by my expression, *this tower is high*, that I have also prescribed this maximum measure to every other. This measure, then, already lies in the conception of a tower, and it is nothing else than the conception of its *generic magnitude*.

There is a certain maximum of magnitude to everything, either in its *genus* (if it is a work of nature), or (if it is a work of freedom) in its design and in the *limits* which ultimate causes prescribe to it. We apply this measure of magnitude, with more or less consciousness, in every apperception of objects; but our perceptions are very different, according as the measure, which we consider ultimate, is more or less contingent or necessary. If, an object surpasses the conception of its generic magnitude, it induces *astonishment* to a certain degree. We are surprised, and our experience is enlarged, but so far as we take no interest in the object itself, the only result is this feeling of surpassed expectation. We deduced that measure only from a series of experiences, and there is no necessity that it should always be adequate. If, on the contrary, a production of freedom surpasses the conception, which we formed from the limitations of its causes, we shall already experience a certain *admiration*. Here it is not only surpassed expectation which surprises us in such an experience, it is at the same time a divestiture of limits. In the former case our attention was only confined to the *product*, which in itself was indifferent; in the latter, we are attracted by the *productive power*, which has a moral relation, or rather, a relation to a moral being, and must then necessarily interest us. This interest will increase in the same degree, as the power which constitutes the active principle, is nobler and more important, and as the limit which we find surpassed is more difficult to overcome. A horse of unusual magnitude will agreeably surprise us, but still more so the strong and dexterous rider, who manages him. Now if we see him leap with this horse over a wide and deep ditch, we are astonished; and if there are hostile ranks into which we see him spring, respect is united with this astonishment, and it passes over into admiration. In the latter case we consider his action as a dynamical magnitude, and apply our conception of *human bravery* as an unit of measure, where it depends upon our own feeling, and upon what we regard as the extreme limit of valour.

On the contrary, the case is entirely different, when the conception of magnitude in a design is surpassed. Here our ultimate measure is not empirical and contingent, but rational and thus necessary, and it cannot be transgressed without annulling the design of the object. The magnitude of a dwelling-house is only determined by its design ; the magnitude of a tower can only be determined by the limits of architecture. Hence if I find the dwelling-house too large for its purpose, it must necessarily displease me. On the contrary, if I find the tower exceeding my idea of its generic height, it will only please me the more. And why? The former is a contradiction, the latter only an unexpected coincidence with that which I seek. I may be very properly pleased when a limit is extended, but not when an intention is frustrated.

If I only say of an object that *it is great*, without stating how great it is, I do not thereby affirm it as something absolutely great, for which no scale is sufficient; I only conceal the scale to which I subject it, in the supposition that it is already contained in its simple conception. It is true, I do not entirely define its magnitude, in comparison with all supposable things, but still partly, and with reference to a certain class of things—then always *objectively* and *logically*, because I declare a proportion, and proceed according to a conception.

But this may be an empirical, consequently a contingent conception, and in this case my judgment will only have subjective validity. Perhaps I mistake for generic magnitude, what is only the magnitude of certain species—perhaps I distinguish as an objective limit, what is only the limit of my Subject—perhaps my private conception of the use and design of a thing underlies my examination. Then, according to the matter, my estimation of magnitude can be entirely *subjective*, although, according to the Form, it is *objective*—that is, an actual definition of proportion. The European regards the Patagonian as a giant, and his judgment has full validity with that nation, from which he has borrowed his conception of human magnitude; in Patagonia, on the contrary, he would

meet with contradiction. Nowhere do we better descry the influence of subjective causes upon human judgment, than in our estimation of magnitude, as well in material as in immaterial things. Every man, we may affirm, has a certain scale of power and virtue within himself, to which he conforms in his estimation of the magnitude of moral actions. The miser will consider the gift of a florin as a very great exertion of his liberality, while the generous man will not be satisfied in giving thrice the sum. A man of common stamp regards *non-deception* as a very great proof of his honesty; another man of delicate feelings frequently hesitates to appropriate a lawful

\* TR.)—Then, making the lowest statement possible, we need an ethical maximum, of which we may have intuition—an absolute magnitude, which humanity cannot surpass, since it represents the limit of humanity: and this, in order that we may satisfy the demands of virtue, and *fulfil* the limits of our humanity. Without such an ethical maximum, all our virtue would be contingent, because our unit of virtue would be so: consequently society would never emerge from its state of nature. Then “a providential man” is needed, if on no other grounds than that we *must do* the right. To this Kantian principle add another, that “not he who *does* right, but he who *loves* it, is the righteous man,” and we have the conception of Christianity; since the *power* to do the right is already involved in the presentation of the ethical maximum, which convicts, enlightens, and inspires. The following passage from Kant’s “Religion within the bounds of Pure Reason,” will not be out of place: “The ideal of humanity as acceptable to God (that is, the idea of an ethical perfection, so far fort<sup>1</sup> as this last may be possible for finite Agent-Intelligents *shackled* by wants and appetites), can only be cogitated by the representation of a Person ready and willing to discharge all the offices of humanity, who, not only by doctrine and example, spreads abroad the utmost amount of good, but does further, although assaulted by the highest temptations, undergo for the sake of the whole world, his enemies not excepted, the greatest miseries, even an ignominious death. Thus would the matter seem to be figured: for we can frame to ourselves no notion of the degree and *momentum* of a force, such as is the *vis insita* of a moral sentiment, except by observing it *warring* against



Although in all these cases the scale is subjective, yet the measurement itself is always objective; for we need only make the scale universal, and the definition of magnitude will have an universal character. This is actually the case with the objective scales, which are in universal use, although they all have a subjective origin, and are obtained from the human corporeity.

But all comparative estimation of magnitude, whether ideal or corporeal, whether it be entirely or only partly defined, results only in relative, and never in absolute magnitude; for if an object actually surpasses what we assume as the extreme and highest scale, still the question may continually recur, *how often* it surpasses it. It is indeed something great compared with its genus, but yet not the greatest possible magnitude; and if the limit is once exceeded, it may be exceeded to infinity. But we now seek the absolute magnitude, since that alone can contain within itself the ground of a *superiority*—for all comparative magnitudes, considered as such, are equivalent. Since nothing can compel the intellect to become stationary in its operations, limits must be placed to it by the imagination; in other words, the estimation of magnitude must cease to be logical—it must be æsthetically conducted.

If I estimate a magnitude logically, I always refer it to my cognitive faculty; if æsthetically, I refer it to my perceptive faculty. On the one hand, I experience something from the object, but on the other hand, only something in

antagonists, and standing, amidst the greatest possible invasions and extremities, unvanquished and victorious." *Simple*.—Thus the same law obtains in the ethical, as in the æsthetical sphere: without possessing a maximum as our unit of measure, we may mistake for generic magnitude what is only the magnitude of certain species, and distinguish as an absolute limit what is only the limit of our Subject. Therefore that which is only a deduction from the pure reason, is neither absolute religion nor absolute morality; both, like their forms, become transcendent and contingent. This æsthetic rule of Science may thus enjoy an universal validity.

myself, induced by the represented magnitude of the object. On the one hand, I perceive something without myself, on the other hand, something within myself. Then I no longer make a particular estimate of magnitude, but I myself for the moment become a magnitude, and truly an infinite one. That object, which converts me into an infinite magnitude, is called *sublime*.

Then the sublime of magnitude is no objective quality of the object to which it is ascribed ; it is only our subjective action, incited by that object. On *the one part*, it arises from the represented inability of the imagination to attain that totality in the exposition of magnitude, which is insisted upon by the reason; on *the other part*, from the evident ability of the reason to set up such a demand. The *repulsive* power of the great and of the sensuo-infinite is based upon the first, their *attractive* power upon the second.

But although the sublime is an appearance which is first subjectively created, still the objects themselves must contain the ground why exactly these and no other objects induce us to make this application. And since further, by our judgment we assume *in the object* the predicate of the sublime (thus signifying, that we undertake this combination not merely arbitrarily, but intending thereby to establish a law for every one), we must contain subjectively a necessary ground, why we make exactly this application and no other, of a certain class of objects.

Therefore there are necessary *internal* and *external* conditions of mathematical sublimity. A certain definite relation between reason and imagination pertains to the former, and a definite relation of the contemplated object to our æsthetic scale of magnitude, to the latter.

Both the imagination and the reason must develop themselves with a certain degree of energy, if greatness would affect us. The imagination desires to apply its whole comprehensive faculty to the exposition of the idea of the Absolute, which effort the reason sedulously presses. If the fancy is dull and inactive, or if the tendency of the mind is more

for conceptions than for intuitions, the most sublime object remains only objectively logical, and is not a subject for æsthetic judgment. This is the reason why men of preponderating powers of analysis, seldom manifest much susceptibility for æsthetic greatness. Either their imagination is not sufficiently lively, even to induce them to set forth the Absolute of the reason, or their intellect is too busily employed, in appropriating the object to *itself*, and in attracting it from the field of intuition into its own discursive domain.

A great object is not at all æsthetical without a certain energy of the fancy; on the other hand, the æsthetical is not sublime without a certain energy of the reason. The idea of the Absolute demands an unusual development of the lofty rational faculty, a certain fertility in ideas, and a more accurate acquaintance of man with his noblest self. He will never be capable of making a supersensuous use of sensuous greatness, whose reason has yet received no culture. The reason will never employ itself in the business, and it will be committed to the imagination, or to the intellect alone. But the imagination singly is far from engaging in a process of comprehension, which is painful to it. It is, then, satisfied with mere apprehension, and it never feels the desire to give an universality to its expositions. Hence the stupid insensibility, with which the savage can dwell in the bosom of the sublimest nature, among the symbols of the Infinite, without being roused from his brutish slumber, without even divining from afar the great Spirit of Nature, which speaks to a feeling soul out of the sensuous immensity.

What the rude savage gazes at with senseless apathy, the enervated voluptuary flees from as an object of abhorrence, which reveals to him only his weakness, not his power. His narrow heart seems painfully rent assunder by representations of greatness. It is true, his fancy is sufficiently susceptible to attempt the exposition of the sensuo-infinite, but his reason is not sufficiently substantial, to *crminate* this undertaking with success. He would climb towards it, but, while half way,

sinks back exhausted. He contends with the fearful Genius, but it is only with terrestrial, not immortal weapons. Conscious of this weakness, he rather shuns a presence which oppresses him, and seeks aid from *Rule*, the comforter of all the weak. If he cannot elevate himself to natural greatness, nature must conform to his little capacity. She must exchange her bold forms for artificial ones, which are foreign to her, but which are made an exigency by his pampered senses. She must subject her will to its iron yoke, and crouch in the fetters of mathematical conformity. This was the origin of the old French taste in gardens, which finally gave way almost universally to the English, but without thereby coming perceptibly nearer to the true taste. For Nature's character is no more a mere manifoldness than it is an uniformity: and her grave and tranquil sedateness is just as little compatible with these hasty and frivolous transitions, with which in the modern style they hurriedly shift her decorations. In all her mutations she never lays aside her harmonious unity; she conceals her fulness in modest simplicity, and we see, even in her most luxuriant freedom, that she respects the law of stability.\*

Among the objective conditions of mathematical sublimity, the first is, that the object in which we would recognise it, should form a whole and so manifest unity; the second, that it should make the highest sensuous measure, to which we are wont to refer all magnitudes, entirely useless. Without the first, the imagination would not be summoned to attempt an exposition of its totality; without the second, it would not be able to fail in this attempt.

\* Horticultural and dramatic poetry have lately met with nearly the same fate, and in fact among the same nations. The same tyranny of rule in the French gardens and the French tragedies; the same wild and manifold irregularity in the parks of the English and in their Shakspeare; and as the German taste has hitherto received its tone from the foreign, it must in this respect also vacillate between both of those extremes.

The horizon exceeds every magnitude, which can anywhere come under our observation, for all objects in space must be included within it. We observe not the less, that a single mountain which raises itself therein, is often capable of giving us a far stronger impression of sublimity, than the whole circle of vision, which embraces not only this mountain, but a thousand other objects of magnitude. This happens because the horizon does not appear to us as a single object, and thus we are not invited to comprehend it as an entirety. But if we abstract from the horizon all objects which attract the sight particularly, and imagine a wide and unbroken plain or the open sea, the horizon itself will become an object, and truly the most sublime that the eye can ever contemplate. Its sphericity in particular contributes much to the impression, since it is so easily embraced, that the imagination can the less abstain from attempting its full conception.

But the æsthetic impression of magnitude depends upon the fact, that the imagination attempts the total representation of the given object *in vain*, and this can only occur, when the highest measure of magnitude which it can actually embrace at once, added to itself as many times as the intellect can actually comprehend in a conception, is too small for the object. But the result seems to be, that objects of equal magnitude must also make an equally sublime impression, and that an object of less magnitude has the power to lessen this impression—which is contrary to experience. For according to this, the part frequently appears sublimer than the whole, the mountain or the tower sublimer than the sky in which it rears itself—the cliff sublimer than the ocean whose waves foam around it. But we must here recollect the above-mentioned conditions, by virtue of which the æsthetic impression only ensues when the totality of the object employs the imagination. But if the latter omits this with respect to the far greater object, and, on the contrary, observes it with the smaller, it may be æsthetically affected by the latter, and not be insensible to the former. But if it conceives of the larger as a magnitude, it at the same

time conceives of it as an unity, and then it must necessarily make an impression stronger in proportion as it exceeds the other in magnitude.

All sensuous magnitudes are either in Space (extended magnitudes), or in time (numeral magnitudes). Although every extended magnitude is at the same time a numeral magnitude (since that which is given in Space we must also comprehend in Time), the numeral magnitude itself is only so far sublime as I transform it into an extended magnitude. It is true, the remoteness of the earth from Sirius is a prodigious Quantum in Time, and outrunning my fancy when I would conceive its totality; but I cease to employ myself in contemplating this Time-magnitude, and assist myself by figures; and then I only obtain the impression of sublimity by recollecting that the highest extended magnitude, which I can comprehend in an unity—a range of mountains, for example, is still a measure much too small and entirely inadequate for this remoteness. Then I take the measure to be applied to it from extended magnitude; so it depends upon the measure, whether an object shall appear to us great.

Extended greatness either appears in *Lengths* or in *Heights*; *Depths* are also included, for depth is only a height below us, just as height may be called a depth above us. Hence the Latin poets do not hesitate to use the expression *profundus* even with respect to heights:—

“Ni faciat, maria ac terras cœlumque profundum  
Quippe ferant rapidi secum——.”

Heights appear altogether more sublime than equally great lengths, the reason of which lies partly in the fact, that dynamical sublimity is associated with the aspect of the first. A simple length, however immeasurable it may be, has nothing fearful in itself, but a height certainly has, since we might be precipitated from it. For the same reason depth is still more sublime than height, since the idea of the fearful is closely

united with it. If a great height would be appalling for us, we must first imagine ourselves at the top, and then change it into a depth. We can easily make such an experiment, if we look at a cloudy sky chequered with blue in a well, or else in a dark piece of water, where its infinite depth gives an appearance far more awful than its height. The same occurs in a higher degree, if we regard it while stretched upon our backs, in which position it is also changed into a depth; and since it is the only object that meets the eye, our imagination is irresistibly impelled to set forth its totality. Height and depth operate more powerfully upon us for this reason also, that the estimation of their magnitude is weakened by no comparison. A length always has a scale in the horizon, beneath which it is lost—for the sky extends as far as any length. It is true, the highest range of mountains is small in comparison with the height of the sky, but it is only the intellect, and not the eye, which teaches that, and it is not the heaven which makes the mountains diminutive by its height, but the mountains show by their magnitude the height of the heaven.

Hence it is not only a representation *optically* just, but also *symbolically* true, when it is said that Atlas supports the heavens. For as the sky itself appears to rest upon Atlas, so does our representation of the height of the sky rest upon the height of Atlas. Then the mountain in a figurative sense actually sustains the sky, as it supports it for our sensuous representation of its height. Without the mountain the sky would *fall*—that is, it would optically sink from its height and become depressed.

UPON

THE TRAGIC ART





## THE TRAGIC ART.

WE take delight in the simple condition of emotion, independent of every relation of its object to our improvement or depravation: and we strive to transport ourselves into that condition, even if it involves some sacrifice. This impulse underlies our most customary pleasures, little regard being had as to whether the emotion creates desire or aversion, whether it is naturally pleasant or painful. Indeed, experience teaches that an unpleasant emotion has the greater attraction for us, and that consequently pleasure at emotion stands in an inverse ratio to its content. It is an universal phenomenon of our nature, that the mournful, the fearful, even the horrible, allures with irresistible enchantment—that we feel ourselves alternately repelled and attracted with equal power, at the approach of grief and of horror. We press on the tiptoe of expectation around the narrator of a tale of murder; we devour with appetite the wildest goblin stories, and all the more eagerly, as they make our hair to stand on end.

The feeling is more vividly expressed at actual intuition of objects. If we view from the shore a tempest, in which a whole fleet founders, our imagination will be delighted as strongly as our feelings are moved; it would be hard to believe, with Lucretius, that this natural pleasure results from a comparison of our own safety with the peril that is perceived. How dense is the crowd that accompanies a criminal to the scene of his punishment! Neither the satisfaction of a love of

justice, nor the ignoble pleasure of gratified revenge, can explain this phenomenon. For the unhappy one may even find absolution in the hearts of the spectators, and the most lively sympathy for his preservation may be active; and yet a greedy desire, stronger or weaker, impels the spectator to direct both eye and ear to the expression of his suffering. If the man of culture and refinement of feelings is an exception, it is not because this impulse has no existence within him, but because he is overcome by the painful strength of his sympathy, or is withheld by the laws of propriety. The rude son of nature, who is restrained by no tender feeling of humanity, surrenders himself to this powerful incitement without aversion. It must, then, be founded in the original dispositions of the human mind, and its explanation must lie in some general psychological law.

But if we also find these rude natural feelings incompatible with the dignity of human nature, and therefore hesitate to found thereon a law for the whole race, there are empirical facts sufficient to place beyond doubt the reality and the universality of pleasure at painful emotions. The severe conflict of opposing inclinations or duties, which is a source of misery for those who suffer it, is delightful for us who contemplate it: we follow with ever-increasing pleasure the progress of a passion to the very abyss into which it hurls its unhappy victim. The same tender feeling which makes us recoil from the sight of physical suffering, or even from the physical expression of a moral suffering, causes us to find a pleasure all the sweeter in sympathy with pure moral pain. The interest is universal with which we linger over the delineations of such objects.

This naturally regards only an emotion which is communicated or reproduced; for the near relation in which an original emotion stands to our impulse for happiness, usually occupies and busies us too much, to allow room for the pleasure which it grants when free from every personal relation. So the feeling of pain predominates in him who is actually governed by a

distressing passion, however much the delineation of his mental state may please the hearer or spectator. Nevertheless, even the original painful emotion is not entirely destitute of pleasure for him who suffers it: only the degrees of this pleasure differ according to the varieties of mental constitution. If no enjoyment existed even in unrest, in doubt, in fear, games of chance would have far less attraction for us, we should not plunge into peril with a bold temerity, and sympathy with foreign suffering would not give us the liveliest delight at the very moment of the greatest illusion and self-substitution. But it is not therefore affirmed, that unpleasant emotions confer pleasure in and for themselves—an assertion which no one would think of maintaining: enough, if these mental states only secure the conditions, under which alone we find certain kinds of satisfaction possible. Then the minds which are particularly susceptible to *these* kinds of satisfaction, and which especially covet them, will be more easily reconciled with those unpleasant conditions, and will not entirely lose their freedom even in the most violent storms of passion.

The displeasure which we experience at disagreeable emotions, originates in the relation of its object to our sensuous or moral faculty; and our pleasure at agreeable emotions springs from the same source. Also the degree of freedom which a man can maintain in the midst of emotions, depends upon the proportion which exists between his sensuous and his moral nature; and as it is understood that no choice exists for us in the moral sphere, while, on the contrary, the sensuous impulse is subject to the legislation of the reason, and is thus in our power, at least ought to be—it is obvious that it is possible to maintain a perfect freedom in all those emotions which have to do with the selfish impulse, and to be master of the degree to which they ought to rise. This will be weaker, just in proportion to the superiority which the moral sense maintains over a man's impulse for happiness, and to the diminution, by obedience to universal laws of reason, of the selfish attachment to his individual Me. Then such a man will have,

in the condition of emotion, a less vivid perception of the relation of an object to his impulse for happiness, and will consequently experience far less of the displeasure which only results from this relation. On the contrary, he will so much the more heed the proportion which this object holds to his morality, and be therefore so much the more susceptible to the pleasure which the relation to the moral sense often mingles with the most painful sufferings of sensuousness. Such a mental disposition is the best fitted to enjoy the satisfaction of compassion, and to preserve the original emotion itself within the limits of compassion. Hence the great value of a philosophy of life, which weakens the feeling of our individuality by continual reference to universal laws, which teaches us to lose our little Self in the coherence of the great whole, and thereby puts us in a state to treat with ourselves as with strangers. This sublime temper of the soul is the lot of strong and philosophic minds, who have learned, by continuous labour upon themselves, to subdue the selfish impulse. Even the bitterest misfortune never carries them beyond a sadness, which too, may always be united with a perceptible degree of pleasure. Only those who are able to separate themselves from themselves, enjoy the privilege of compassionating themselves, and of feeling a personal suffering in the mild reflection of sympathy.

The preceding remarks intimate with sufficient clearness, the sources of the enjoyment which emotion, and especially that which is mournful, guarantees to us. It is greater, as we have seen, in moral dispositions, and it operates freely in proportion to the mind's independence of the selfish impulse. And farther, it is more lively and vigorous in mournful emotions, where the self-love is disturbed, than in joyful emotions, which suppose a satisfaction of the latter: then it increases where the selfish impulse is offended, and decreases where this impulse is flattered. Let us know only two sources of enjoyment, the satisfaction of the impulse for happiness, and

the fulfilment of moral laws: a pleasure, then, which is proved not to result from the former source, must necessarily originate from the latter. Thus the pleasure with which painful emotions affect us at second hand, results from our moral nature; and in certain cases they may affect us agreeably, even when felt at first hand.

Attempts have been made in many ways, to explain the enjoyment of compassion: but none of the solutions could be satisfactory, because the ground of the phenomenon was sought in accompanying circumstances rather than in the nature itself of emotion. With many, the enjoyment of compassion is nothing but the enjoyment of the soul in its own sensibility: with others, pleasure in a highly excited state of mental activity: some make it result from the discovery of morally beautiful traits of character, on occasion of a conflict with misfortune and passion. But the point still remains unsolved, why exactly the pain itself, the special suffering, should attract us to it: it powerfully in objects of compassion, since, according to the above explanations, a weaker degree of suffering must evidently be more favourable to the alleged causes of our pleasure at emotion. The liveliness and vigour of the representation excited in our fancy, the moral excellence of the suffering person, the introversion of the sympathizing Subject upon himself, may indeed heighten the pleasure at emotion, but they are not the causes which produce it. The suffering of a feeble soul, the grief of a villain, certainly do not secure to us this enjoyment, but not because they do not excite our compassion in the same degree as would the suffering hero or the struggling saint. Then the prior question continually recurs, why precisely the degree of suffering should define the degree of sympathetic pleasure at emotion: and it can only be answered by supposing the attack upon our sensuousness to be the condition for the excitement of that mental power, whose activity creates that sympathetic enjoyment at suffering.

Now this power is none other than the Reason; and in so far as its free efficiency, as absolute spontaneity, specially de-

serves the name of activity, in so far as the mind feels perfectly free and independent only in its moral action—in so far, certainly, is the satisfied impulse for activity the source of our enjoyment at mournful emotions. But then that which underlies this enjoyment is not the number, not the vivacity of representation, not the activity of the mental powers, but it is a definite species of the former, and a definite, rationally created activity of the latter.

We find, then, a communicated emotion delightful, because it satisfies the impulse for activity: a mournful emotion secures that effect in a higher degree, because it satisfies this impulse in a higher degree. The mind expresses its highest activity only in its condition of perfect freedom, only in the consciousness of its rational nature, since only there does it make application of a power which is superior to every resistance.

Then that mental condition which is specially favourable for the annunciation of this power, and which awakens this lofty activity, is most appropriate for a rational being, and most satisfactory to the impulse for activity; it must, then, be united with an especial degree of pleasure. A mournful emotion places us in such a condition, and the pleasure it causes must surpass the pleasure at joyful emotion, according as our moral ability is elevated above our sensuousness.

That which is only a subordinate member in the whole system of design, Art may separate from its connexion and pursue as a main design. Enjoyment may be only a mediate design for Nature: for Art it is the highest. Then it pertains particularly to the design of the latter, not to neglect the lofty enjoyment which is contained in mournful emotions. But that art in particular, whose design is the enjoyment of compassion, is, by universal acceptance, called the Tragic Art.

Art fulfils its design by an imitation of nature, when it fulfils the conditions under which enjoyment becomes possible in reality, and unites, according to an intelligent plan, the scattered institutes of nature, in order to attain as its final aim, that which nature only made her accessory design. Then the

Tragic Art will imitate nature in those actions which have a special power to awake compassionate emotion.

In order, then, to prescribe to Tragic Art some universal method of procedure, it is above all necessary to know the conditions under which, according to daily experience, the enjoyment of emotion is wont to be most certainly and strongly created: but, at the same time, those circumstances must be regarded, which confine or entirely destroy it.

Experience gives two opposite causes, which hinder enjoyment at emotion: either if compassion is too feebly excited, or so strongly, that the communicated emotion passes over into the vivacity of an original emotion. The former may lie either in the weakness of the impression which we receive from original suffering, in which case we say that our heart remains cold, and we are sensible of neither sorrow nor enjoyment; or it lies in the strong perceptions which resist the given impression, and weaken or entirely destroy the enjoyment of compassion by their preponderance in the mind.

There is, with every tragic emotion, the representation of incongruity (*Zweckwidrigkeit*), which in every case, if the emotion would be pleasing, leads to a representation of a higher congruity (with a design). It depends upon the relation between these two opposite representations, whether pleasure or displeasure predominates on occasion of an emotion. If the representation of incongruity is more lively than that of the opposite, or if the design which is violated is of greater importance than that which is fulfilled, displeasure will always have the upper hand; and this may be true objectively of the human race, or only subjectively of individuals.

If displeasure at the cause of a misfortune becomes too strong, it wakens our compassion for him who suffers. Two entirely distinct perceptions cannot exist at the same time in the mind in a high degree. Indignation against the originator of the suffering will become the prevailing emotion, and every other feeling must give way to it. So our sympathy is always weakened, if the unfortunate person whom we ought to com-



passionate, has plunged into ruin through his own unpardonable guilt, or, from weakness of intellect and from imbecility, does not know how to extricate himself, while he has an opportunity. It injures not a little our sympathy with the unfortunate Lear, abused by his ungrateful daughters, that the childish old man should resign his crown so inconsiderately, and divide his love so foolishly among his daughters. In Cronegh's tragedy, Olinthus and Sophronia, the most fearful suffering to which we see both of these martyrs to their faith exposed, can but feebly excite our compassion, and their sublime heroism can extort but little admiration, because madness alone can prompt an action like that by which Olinthus brought himself and his whole people to the edge of ruin.

Our compassion is equally weakened, if the originator of a misfortune, whose innocent victim we ought to compassionate, fills our soul with abhorrence. The tragic poet will always mar the perfection of his work, if he cannot succeed without introducing a villain, and if he is compelled to deduce greatness of suffering from greatness of crime. Shakspeare's Iago and Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra in *Roxelana*, Franz Moor in the *Robbers*, testify for this assertion. A poet who understands his true interest, will not let misfortune depend upon an evil will which meditates misfortune, nor still less upon a deficiency of intellect, but upon the stress of circumstances. If it does not result from moral sources, but from external things, which neither have a will nor are subject to one, our compassion is purer, and, at least, is not weakened by any representation of moral incongruity. But then the sympathizing spectator is not exempt from the unpleasant feeling of an incongruity in nature, which in this case moral conformity alone can save. Compassion mounts to a degree much higher, if its objects are both him who suffers and him who originates the suffering. This can occur only if the latter excites neither our hatred nor our contempt, but has been brought against his inclination, to become the author of misfortune. Thus it is a preeminent beauty in the German *Iphigenia*, that the king of Taurus, the

only one who opposes the wishes of Orestes and his sister, never forfeits our regard, and even extorts love from us at last.

This species of the affecting is yet surpassed by that in which the cause of misfortune is not only not contradictory to morality, but is only possible through morality, and where the reciprocal suffering only results from the representation of the suffering awakened. Of this kind is the situation of Chimenen and Roderic, in the *Cid* of Peter Corneille: unquestionably, as regards the complication of events, the master-piece of the tragic stage. Honour and filial duty arm Roderic's hand against the father of his beloved, and bravery gives him the victory; honour and filial duty arouse against him a fearful accuser and persecutor in Chimenen, the daughter of the slain. Both act against their inclination, which shrinks from the misfortune of the persecuted object, with an anxiety equal to the zeal with which moral duty causes it to summon this misfortune. Then both win our highest regard, because they fulfil a moral duty at the cost of inclination, both inflame our compassion to the highest degree, because they suffer voluntarily, and from a motive which renders them highly estimable. Here then our compassion is so little disturbed by contrary feelings, that it rather burns with twofold intensity; and our sympathetic pleasure can still be sobered by a shade of sadness, only through the impossibility of reconciling the idea of adversity with the greatest worthiness for prosperity. Yet, however much may be gained in the fact that our displeasure at this incongruity concerns no moral being, but takes the most harmless direction, and is turned against necessity, it is all counterbalanced by that blind subjection to destiny, which is always so humiliating and mortifying to free, self-determining beings. It is this which still leaves something to be desired even in the admirable pieces of the Grecian stage, because in all these a final appeal is made to necessity, and a knot is always left undone for our reason, which is wont to demand that there should be reason. But this too is loosed, and with it every shadow of displeasure vanishes, when man has attained the last and highest point of

his moral culture, the one to which the emotive Art can raise him. This happens, if this dissatisfaction with destiny falls away and is merged in a conjecture, or rather, in a distinct consciousness of a teleological connexion of things, of an elevated order, of a beneficent Will. Then the refreshing representation of complete design in the great whole of nature, is united with our enjoyment at the perception of moral harmony; and the apparent violation of the former, which moved us to sorrow in the single case, becomes only an incentive for our reason to search in universal laws for a vindication of this special case, and to dissolve the single discord in the great harmony. Grecian Art never mounted to this pure height of tragic emotion, because neither the popular religion nor even the philosophy of the Greeks had matured them for such an effort. It is reserved for modern art, which enjoys the advantage of receiving a purer material from an enlightened philosophy, to fulfil this lofty demand, and thus to unfold the whole moral dignity of Art. If we must really despair of ever restoring Grecian Art, because the philosophic genius of the age and modern culture are unfavourable to poetry, yet they operate less detrimentally for the Tragic Art, which is more secure upon a moral base. Perhaps our culture compensates that special art for the robbery which it has committed upon Art in general.

As the force of tragic emotion is weakened by the introduction of disagreeable representations and feelings, and the pleasure it produces is thereby diminished, so, on the other hand, by approximating too closely to the original emotion, it may deviate to a point where the grief will preponderate. It has been remarked, that displeasure during emotion originates from the relation of its object to our sensuousness, and pleasure from the relation of the emotion itself to our moral sense. Then there is presupposed a definite proportion between our sensuousness and our morality, which determines the proportion of displeasure to pleasure during mournful emotions, and which can neither be altered or reversed, without also reversing the feelings of pleasure and displeasure in emotion, or

changing each to its opposite. The more actively sensuousness reigns in our dispositions, the weaker will be the influence of the moral sense, and inversely, the more power the former loses, the more strength the latter wins. Then that which gives a preponderance to the sensuousness in our dispositions, must necessarily, from the constraint which it imposes upon the moral sense, diminish our enjoyment in emotions, which results only from this moral sense : likewise, all that gives an impulse to the latter in our minds, disarms grief of its sting, even in cases of original emotion. But our sensuousness actually acquires this preponderance, if the representations of sorrow rise to such a degree of vivacity, as to make it impossible for us to distinguish the communicated from an original emotion, our own Me from the subject of the suffering, or truth from fiction. It also acquires this preponderance, if it is favoured by an accumulation of its objects, and by the delusive light which an excited imagination throws around them. On the other hand, nothing is better suited to refer it back again to its limits, than the co-operation of supersensuous, moral ideas, upon which, as spiritual points of vantage, the reason may sustain itself in rising out of the dim atmosphere of the feelings into a clearer horizon. Hence the great charm which universal truths or maxims, scattered judiciously through a dramatic dialogue, have had for all cultivated nations, and hence the almost excessive use to which they were appropriated by the Greeks. Nothing is more welcome to a moral disposition, than to be roused from sensuous service to self-activity and to be restored to its freedom, after a long sustained condition of mere suffering.

So much for the causes which restrict our compassion, and obstruct enjoyment at tragic emotions. The conditions must now be enumerated, under which compassion is demanded, and the pleasure of emotion is most infallibly and strongly aroused.

All compassion presupposes representations of suffering, and its degree of intensity depends upon their liveliness, truth, completeness, and duration.

1. The more lively the representations are, the more decisively the mind is invited to activity, the more its sensuousness is attracted, and then the more powerfully the moral ability is called into opposition. But representations of suffering may subsist in two different ways, which are not equally favourable to vivacity of impression. Sufferings which we witness affect us more strongly than those of which we first make experience through narration or description. The former abolish the free play of our imagination, and press to our hearts by the shortest route, as they come into direct contact with our sensuousness. In a narration, on the contrary, the particular is first elevated to the universal, from which it is afterwards cognised; then much strength is already withdrawn from the impression by this necessary operation of the intellect. But a feebler impression cannot become undisputed master of the mind; it will give room for heterogeneous representations to weaken its effect and to distract the attention. The exhibitory narrative also transports us very often from the mental condition of the persons acting into that of the narrator, which interrupts the delusion so necessary for creating compassion. As often as the narrator intrudes in his own person, there arises a cessation of the action, and also one unavoidably in our sympathizing emotion; this occurs, when the dramatic poet forgets himself in the progress of his dialogue, and puts observations into the mouth of the speaker, which only an unconcerned spectator could make. Hardly one of our modern tragedies is free from this error; yet the French alone have exalted it to a rule. Direct, living presence and embodiment are necessary, then, in order to give to our representations of suffering that vigour, which is requisite to produce a high degree of emotion.

2. But we can receive the most lively impressions of a suffering, without being brought to a notable degree of compassion, if these impressions are wanting in truth. We must create for ourselves a conception of the suffering in which we should participate; the requisite for this is its agreement with

something which existed previously within us. That is to say, the possibility of compassion depends upon the perception or supposition of a likeness between us and the subject of the suffering. Where this likeness can be cognised, compassion is always the necessary result: where it is wanting, compassion is impossible. The greater and the more apparent the likeness, the more lively our compassion is; the less considerable the former is, the weaker the latter is. If we would feel another's emotion reproduced in ourselves, we must have all the internal conditions for such an emotion, in order that the external causes which gave, by their union, origin to another's emotion, may also exert a like influence upon us. We must be able, without doing violence to ourselves, to exchange our personality with him, to transfer for the moment our own Me into his condition. But how is it possible for us to have perception of another's condition, if we have not previously found *ourselves* in this other person?

This likeness covers the whole mental disposition, so far as this is necessary and universal. But universality and necessity are the special characteristics of our moral nature. The sensuous ability can be differently determined by contingent causes; even our cognitive faculty is dependent upon mutable conditions; our morality alone rests upon itself, and is therefore the best fitted to serve as a safe and universal measure of this likeness. Then we call that representation a true one, which we find to coincide with our form of thought and perception, which already stands in a certain relationship to our own train of thought, and which our mind embraces with facility. If the likeness touches our mental peculiarity—our particular determinations of general human character, which may be abstracted without detriment to this general character, then that representation is true only for us. But if it touches the universal and essential Form which we attribute to the whole race, it is to be regarded as objectively true. The sentence of the first Brutus, the suicide of Cato, had a subjective truth for the Romans. The representations and feelings from which the ac-

tions of both those men resulted, do not directly flow from an universal nature, but mediately from a human nature specially defined. In order to share these feelings with them, we must possess a Roman disposition, or at least be able to assume it for a moment. On the contrary, it is only necessary to be men, in order to be thrown into lofty emotion by the heroic sacrifice of a Leonidas, by the quiet submission of an Aristides, by the voluntary death of a Socrates, or to be affected to tears by the terrible reverse of a Darius. We concede an objective truth to such representations, in contradistinction to the former, because they coincide with subjective nature, and thereby maintain an universality and necessity just as severe as if they were independent of every subjective condition.

Finally, the delineation which is subjectively true, is not to be confounded with arbitrary determinations, because it rests upon those that are contingent. The subjectively True also results at last from the universal organization of the human mind, which was specially defined only by special circumstances, both being its necessary conditions. If the decision of Cato could contradict the universal laws of human nature, it would no longer be subjectively true. Representations of the latter kind have a narrower sphere of operation, only because they presuppose other determinations, besides those which are universal. The Tragic Art can employ them with greater intensive effect, by renouncing that which is extensive: still, the unconditioned True, the purely human in human relations, will constantly be its most available material, because therewith the universality of impression is secured, without the need of resigning its strength.

3. After liveliness and truth in tragic delineations the third requisite is completeness. The representation must exhaust all that which must be given from without, in order to throw the mind into the designed emotion. If a spectator with disposition ever so Roman, would make the mental condition of Cato his own, if he would appropriate the last decision of the republican, he must find this decision founded not only in the

Roman's soul, but also in his circumstances: both his external and internal situation, in its whole connexion, must be apparent to him, and no single link should fail in the chain of determinations, with which the last decision of the Roman is necessarily connected. The truth itself of a delineation is not generally cognisable without this completeness, for nothing but the similarity of circumstances, which we must completely penetrate, can justify our judgment concerning the similarity of perceptions; because the emotion results only from the union of external and internal conditions. If we are to decide whether we would have acted as Cato did, we must above all things imagine ourselves in Cato's whole external situation; and not till then are we competent to estimate our perceptions against his own, to plant a conclusion upon the likeness, and to pass judgment upon its truth.

This completeness of delineation is only possible through the union of many single representations and perceptions, which are related to each other as cause and effect, and, by combination, complete a totality for our cognition. If these representations would strongly move us, they must all make a direct impression upon our sensuousness, and be induced by a manifested action, since the narrative form always weakens this impression. Then completeness of tragic delineation depends upon a series of single, embodied actions, which league themselves with the tragic action as with a whole.

4. Finally, the representations of suffering must have a prolonged effect upon us, if they would excite a high degree of emotion. We find the emotion into which a foreign suffering transports us, to be a condition of constraint, from which we hasten to liberate ourselves; and the delusion which is so intolerable for compassion vanishes with too much facility. Then the mind must be forcibly bound to these representations, and be deprived of the liberty of prematurely disengaging itself from the delusion. Vivacity of the representations and strength of the impressions which infringe upon our sensuousness, are inadequate for this purpose: for the more violently



the susceptiveness is attracted, the more vigorously does the soul's reacting power exert itself to overcome the impression. But the poet who would move us need not weaken this spontaneous power; for the lofty enjoyment which tragic emotions secure to us, lies in the conflict itself with the suffering sensuousness. Then if the mind, regardless of its resisting spontaneity, would remain attached to the perceptions of suffering, they must sustain a skilful, periodic interruption, and even be relieved by antagonistic perceptions—in order to recur with augmented strength, and renew the oftener the vivacity of the first impression. The alternation of perceptions is the most powerful remedy of weariness and the effect of habitude. The alternation refreshes the exhausted sensuousness, and the gradation of the impressions excites the spontaneity to a proportional resistance. It must be incessantly employed in maintaining its freedom against the stress of sensuousness, but not so as to gain the victory before the climax, still less to succumb in the struggle: else the suffering is at an end in the first case, and the activity in the second, while emotion can only be excited by the union of both. The great secret of the Tragic Art lies in the dextrous management of this conflict; it there displays itself in its most brilliant light.

This purpose makes necessary a series of alternating representations, with an appropriate combination of many actions, corresponding to these representations, on which the main action, and, through that, the designed tragic impression, winds off completely, like a clew from the spindle, and envelops the mind at last as with an unyielding net. The artist, if the figure is here allowable, first gathers thriftily all the single rays of the object which he makes the instrument of his tragic design, and beneath his hands they become as lightning, which inflames all hearts. If the tyro hurls at once and fruitlessly the whole thunderbolt of horror and of fear, the artist attains his purpose step by step, by little strokes, and penetrates the soul completely, just because he moved it gently and by degrees.

If now we draw results from the previous investigations, we have the following conditions, which lie at the foundation of tragic emotion. First, the object of our compassion must belong to our *genus*, in the entire sense of this word, and the action in which we are to participate must be a moral one, that is, it must be comprehended within the province of freedom. Second, the suffering, its sources and its degrees, must be entirely communicated to us in a succession of combined events; and moreover, in the third place, it must be objectively presented, not set forth mediately through description, but directly through action. Art unites and fulfils all these conditions in tragedy.

Accordingly Tragedy would be poetic imitation of a consistent series of events (a complete action), which shows us men in a condition of suffering, and whose design is the excitement of our compassion.

It is firstly, imitation of an action: and is distinguished from the other kinds of composition which only narrate or describe, by the conception of imitation. In tragedies, single events at the moment of their occurrence are represented as present, before the imagination or before the sense; and directly present without the mediation of a third power. The epic, the romance, the simple narration remove the action into the distance, by means of their Form, because they interpose the narrator between the acting persons and the reader. But the past, the remote, weakens, as we know, the impression and the emotion of sympathy: the present strengthens it. All narrative forms convert the present into the past: all dramatic forms make the past to be present.

Secondly, Tragedy is imitation of a series of events, of an action. It is an imitative representation not only of the perceptions and emotions of tragic persons, but of the events from which they sprang, and which occasioned their development: this distinguishes it from lyrical composition, which, it is true, likewise gives poetic imitations of certain mental conditions, but not of actions. An elegy, a song, an ode, can set

forth in imitation the present mental state of the poet (whether in his own or in an ideal person), as conditioned by special circumstances, and in so far they are certainly comprehended under the conception of Tragedy; but they do not entirely satisfy its conditions, because they are restricted to representations of feelings alone. Other essential distinctions lie in the different design of these modes of composition.

Thirdly, Tragedy is imitation of a complete action. A single occurrence, however tragic it may be, gives as yet no Tragedy. Many events, mutually sustained as cause and effect, must unite themselves appropriately into a whole, if truth—that is, the unison of a represented emotion, character, and the like, with the nature of our own souls, which is the only ground of compassion—would be cognised. If we do not feel that we ourselves would have suffered and acted in the same way, under like circumstances, our sympathy continues dormant. Then it is necessary that we should pursue the represented action through its whole continuity, and see it result from the soul of its originator by a natural gradation, during the joint operation of external circumstances. Such is the rise, progress, and completion, before our eyes, of the curiosity of *Œdipus*, the jealousy of *Othello*. And in this way alone can the great gulf be filled, which exists between the peace of an innocent soul and the conscience-pangs of a criminal, between a fortunate man's proud security and his fearful ruin—in short, the gulf between the tranquil state of the reader's mind at the commencement of an action, and the stormy excitement of his feelings at its close.

A series of many cohering incidents is demanded, to excite within us an alternation of mental emotions, which preserves the attention, calls forth all our spiritual ability, enlivens the flagging impulse for action, and inflames it all the more by postponing the final satisfaction. The mind finds aid against the suffering of sensuousness nowhere but in the moral sense. Then in order to summon the latter more pressingly, the tragic artist must prolong the torments of the former but at the

same time offering to it periodic alleviations in order to make the triumph of the moral sense more difficult and signal. This double process is only possible by means of a series of actions, which are judiciously chosen and united for that purpose.

Fourthly, Tragedy is *poetic* imagination of a compassionate action, and thus differs from historic imitation. It would be the latter, if it pursued a historic design, if it sought to give instruction concerning occurrences and the manner of their occurrence. In this case it would be obliged to confine itself entirely to historic correctness, for its object would be defeated without a true representation of actual events. But Tragedy has a poetic design, that is, it represents an action in order to move, and to delight by the emotion. Then if it employs a given material in conformity with this its design, it possesses freedom in imitation: it contains the power, and even the obligation, to subordinate historic truth to the laws of poetry, and to elaborate the given material according to its requisitions. But as it is prepared to attain its design, which is emotion, only under the condition of the greatest harmony with the laws of Nature, it stands, without detriment to its historic freedom, under the rigorous law of natural truth, which is called poetic truth in contradistinction from that which is historic. Thus it is plain in what way poetic truth may often suffer from a severe regard for historic truth, and inversely, how poetic truth may gain so much the more by a stupid violation of historic truth. As the tragic poet, and generally every poet, is only subject to the law of poetic truth, the most scrupulous regard for historic truth can never absolve him from his obligation as a poet, can never serve to excuse a transgression of poetic truth, or a deficiency of interest. Hence it betrays very narrow conceptions of the Tragic Art, and of composition in general, to drag the tragic poet before the tribunal of History, and to demand instruction from him, who already by virtue of his name is pledged for emotion and delight alone. Then even if the poet himself should have surrendered his artistic privilege by an anxious submission to

historic truth, thus silently admitting the jurisdiction of History over his product, Art rightfully summons him before its tribunal : and if a Death of Hermann, a Minona, a Fust von Stromberg, cannot abide the investigation, they must be considered very moderate tragedies, with ever so much punctilious attention to costume, and to the character of the age and people.

Fifthly, Tragedy is imitation of an action which shows us men in the condition of suffering. The expression, *men*, is nothing less than superfluous, and only serves to denote accurately the limits within which Tragedy is confined in its choice objects. Our sympathy can be aroused only by the suffering of sensuous-moral beings, like ourselves. Then beings which are discharged from all the restraints of morality—as evil spirits are figured in popular superstitions or in the poet's imagination—and men, who are like them—also beings who are free from the constraint of sensuousness, as we imagine pure intelligences to be, and men, who have withdrawn themselves from that constraint to a greater extent than human weakness allows—all these are equally worthless for the purpose of Tragedy. In general the conception of suffering, and of a suffering in which we should participate, already determines that only men, in the full sense of the word, can be the objects of it. A pure intelligence cannot suffer, and a human subject who approximates in an unusual degree to this pure intelligence can never excite a great amount of pathos, because his moral nature affords a too prompt protection against the suffering of a weak sensuousness. An entirely sensuous subject, without morality, and such natures as approach that state, are certainly capable of the most fearful degree of suffering, because their sensuousness has a preponderating influence, but, being sustained by no moral feeling, they become a prey to this pain : and we turn away with displeasure and aversion from a suffering which is entirely helpless from an absolute inactivity of the reason. Then the tragic poet justly gives the preference to mixed characters, and his heroic ideal lies at a point equidistant from the abandoned and the perfect.

Finally, Tragedy combines all these qualities, in order to arouse the emotion of sympathy. Many of the regulations which the tragic poet makes, are equally applicable to another design, as for instance, one that is moral or historical ; but that he intends precisely the tragic design and no other, frees him from all demands which do not coincide with it, but at the same time obliges him to conform to this latter design in every special application of the above established rules.

The final ground, to which all rules for a definite mode of composition relate, is called the design of this mode : the combination of means whereby a mode of composition attains its design, is called its Form. Then Design and Form stand to each other in the closest relation. The latter is determined, and prescribed as necessary, by the former ; and the fulfilled design will be the result of a felicitously regarded form.

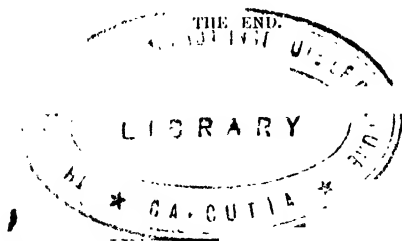
As every mode of composition pursues a design peculiar to itself, it will therefore be distinguished from other modes by a peculiar form, for the form is the medium through which it attains its design. That which it performs distinctively, it must perform by virtue of its distinctive quality. The design of Tragedy is Emotion ; its form, imitation of an action inducing suffering. Many modes of composition can have, in common with Tragedy, the same action for its object. Many modes can pursue that which is the design of Tragedy, Emotion, although not as their main design. Then that which is distinctive in Tragedy consists in the relation of the form to the design, that is, in the manner in which it uses its object with respect to its design, the way in which it attains its design through its object.

It is the design of Tragedy to excite compassionate emotion, but if its form is the medium through which it attains this design, imitation of a moving action must be the continent (*Inbegriff*) of all the conditions under which the compassionate emotion is most strongly excited.

The product of a mode of composition is complete, in which the form peculiar to this mode has been used in the best way

for the attainment of its design. Then a Tragedy is complete, in which the tragic form, that is, the imitation of a moving action, has been made most available for the excitement of compassionate emotion. Those Tragedies, then, will be the most complete, in which the excited sympathy is less the effect of the Matter than that of the best employed tragic Form. We may regard this as the ideal of Tragedy.

Many tragedies, in other respects full of lofty poetic beauty, are dramatically faulty, because they do not seek to attain the design of Tragedy by the best application of tragic form: and others are so, because they attain by the tragic form a design other than that of Tragedy. Not a few of our most admired pieces affect us solely on account of the Matter, and we are sufficiently generous or careless, to attribute to the bungling artist as a merit this propriety of the material. With respect to other pieces, we seem to forget entirely the purpose for which the poet has collected us together in the theatre; and content to be agreeably entertained by the brilliant play of imagination and wit, we never observe that we leave it with untouched heart. Should venerable Art (for such is that which speaks of 'he divinity within us) commit its case to such arbiters through such champions? Mediocrity alone is inspired by the contentment of the public, but genius is discouraged and disgraced.











**081/SCH**



**1862**

